

3 2769 01 776 315

NAZARETH COLLEGE OF ROCHESTER



Irv

v.2.

10758

Irving.
The Works of... (The Alhambra;
tales of a traveler.)

NAZARETH COLLEGE
LIBRARY





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025



THE ALHAMBRA.

FRONTISPIECE—Irving, Vol. Two.

THE
OF
WASHINGTON IRVING

THE ALHAMBRA
TALES OF A TRAVELER

NAZARETH COLLEGE
LIBRARY

ILLUSTRATED

Volume Two

WITHDRAWN

NEW YORK
PETER FENELON COLLIER, PUBLISHER
1897

10758

813.1
15v

CONTENTS

VOLUME TWO

THE ALHAMBRA

A SERIES OF TALES AND SKETCHES OF THE MOORS AND SPANIARDS

Alhambra, The, by Moonlight.....	54
Inhabitants of.....	56
Interior of the.....	27
Finisher of the.....	248
Founder of the.....	244
Government of the.....	24
Visitors to the.....	152
A Ramble Among the Hills.....	68
Boabdil El Chico.....	81
Governor Manco and the Soldier.....	210
Jusef Abul Hagias, the Finisher of the Alhambra.....	250
Legend of the Arabian Astrologer.....	90
“ of the Moor's Legacy.....	132
“ of the Page and the Ger-Falcon.....	187
“ of Prince Ahmed El Kamel.....	157
“ of the Rose of the Alhambra.....	187
“ of the Three Beautiful Princesses.....	108
“ of the Two Discreet Statues.....	227

Local Traditions...	130
Mahamad Aben Alahmar, the Founder of the Alhambra.....	244
Reflections on the Moslem Domination in Spain.....	39
The Adventure of the Mason.....	65
The Author's Chamber.....	49
The Balcony.....	60
The Court of Lions.....	76
The Governor and the Notary.....	204
The House and the Weather-cock.....	89
The Household.....	42
The Journey.....	9
The Pilgrim of Love.....	155
The Tower of Comares.....	34
The Tower of Las Infantas.....	88
The Truant.....	46
The Veteran.....	202

TALES OF A TRAVELER

Part First

STRANGE STORIES BY A NERVOUS GENTLEMAN

A Hunting Dinner.....	256
The Adventure of my Aunt.....	273
The Adventure of the Mysterious Picture.....	288
The Adventure of the Mysterious Stranger.....	297
The Adventure of my Uncle.....	261
The Adventure of my Grandfather.....	278
The Bold Dragoon.....	278
The Story of the Young Italian.....	305

Part Second

BUCKTHORNE AND HIS FRIENDS

A Literary Dinner.....	336
Buckthorne, or, the Young Man of Great Expectations.....	362
Grave Reflections of a Disappointed Man.....	408
Literary Life.....	333
The Booby Squire.....	414

The Club of Queer Fellows.....	339
The Poor Devil Author.....	345
The Strolling Manager.....	419

Part Third

THE ITALIAN BANDITTI

The Adventure of the Little Antiquary.....	445
The Adventure of the Popkins Family.....	452
The Inn at Terracina.....	456
The Painter's Adventure.....	457
The Story of the Bandit Chieftain.....	466
The Story of the Young Robber.....	478

Part Fourth

THE MONEY-DIGGERS

Hell Gate.....	495
Kidd the Pirate.....	498
The Devil and Tom Walker.....	503
The Adventure of Sam, the Black Fisherman, commonly denom- inated Mud Sam.....	540
Wolfert Webber; or, Golden Dreams.....	517

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME TWO

THE ALHAMBRA—FRONTISPIECE	
ARCH OF THE ALHAMBRA	
DANCING THE FANDANGO	
GATEWAY OF THE ALHAMBRA	
THE ADVENTURE OF THE MASON	
THE SPELL-BOUND GATEWAY	
LEGEND OF THE MOOR'S LEGACY	
ENCHANTED ARMOR	
TALES OF A TRAVELER—FRONTISPIECE	
THE BOLD DRAGOON	
THE DEATH OF FLIPPO	
MR. DRIBBLE AND HIS FRIEND IN GREEN	
BUCKTHORNE AND THE SHOPKEEPER'S DAUGHTER	
THE LITTLE ANTIQUARY AND HIS HOSTS	
THE ENGLISHMAN'S ADVENTURE	
DEATH OF THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER	

THE ALHAMBRA

*A SERIES OF TALES AND SKETCHES OF
THE MOORS AND SPANIARDS*

DEDICATION

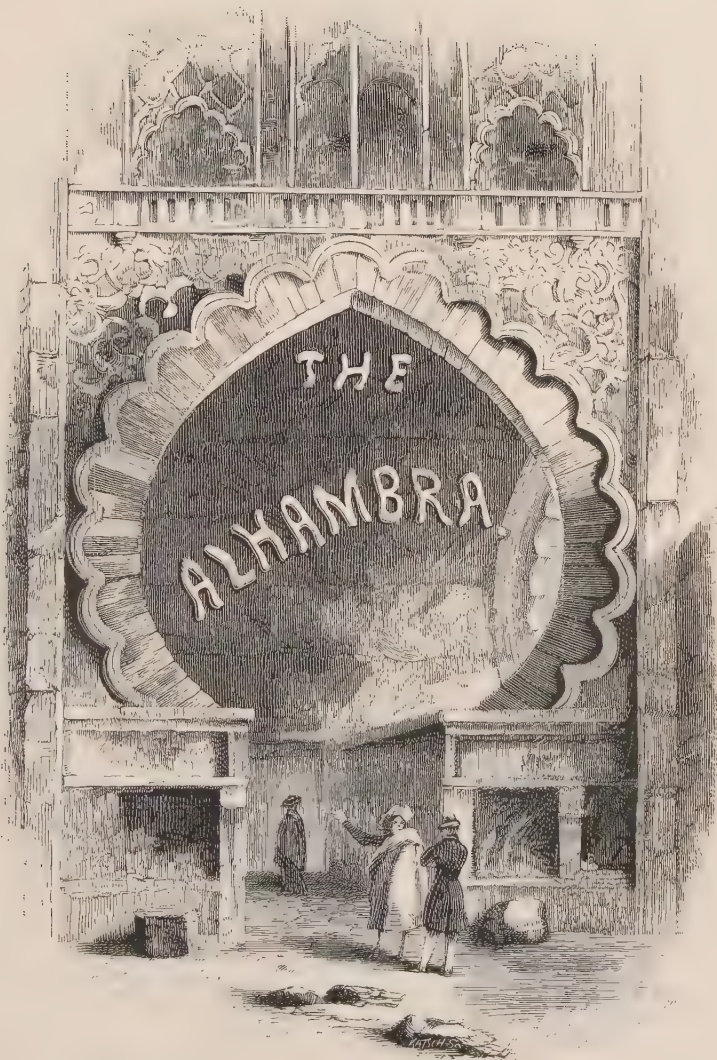
TO DAVID WILKIE, ESQ., R.A.

MY DEAR SIR—You may remember that, in the course of the rambles we once took together about some of the old cities of Spain, particularly Toledo and Seville, we frequently remarked the mixture of the Saracenic with the Gothic, remaining from the time of the Moors, and were more than once struck with incidents and scenes in the streets that brought to mind passages in the “Arabian Nights.” You then urged me to write something illustrative of these peculiarities; “something in the Haroun Alraschid style,” that should have a dash of that Arabian spice which pervades everything in Spain. I call this to mind to show you that you are, in some degree, responsible for the present work; in which I have given a few “Arabesque” sketches and tales, taken from the life, or founded on local traditions, and mostly struck off during a residence in one of the most legendary and Morisco-Spanish places of the Peninsula.

I inscribe this work to you, as a memorial of the pleasant scenes we have witnessed together in that land of adventure, and as a testimony of an esteem for your worth which can only be exceeded by admiration of your talents.

Your friend and fellow-traveler,

THE AUTHOR.



ARCH OF THE ALHAMBRA.

Irving, Vol. Two, p. 15.

THE ALHAMBRA

THE JOURNEY

IN the spring of 1829, the author of this work, whom curiosity had brought into Spain, made a rambling expedition from Seville to Granada, in company with a friend, a member of the Russian embassy at Madrid. Accident had thrown us together from distant regions of the globe, and a similarity of taste led us to wander together among the romantic mountains of Andalusia. Should these pages meet his eye, wherever thrown by the duties of his station, whether mingling in the pageantry of courts or meditating on the truer glories of nature, may they recall the scenes of our adventurous companionship, and with them the remembrance of one in whom neither time nor distance will obliterate the recollection of his gentleness and worth.

And here, before setting forth, let me indulge in a few previous remarks on Spanish scenery and Spanish traveling. Many are apt to picture Spain in their imaginations as a soft southern region decked out with all the luxuriant charms of voluptuous Italy. On the contrary, though there are exceptions in some of the maritime provinces, yet, for the greater part, it is a stern, melancholy country, with rugged mountains and long, naked, sweeping plains, destitute of trees, and invariably silent and lonesome, partaking of the savage and solitary character of Africa. What adds to this silence and loneliness is the absence of singing birds, a natural consequence of the want of groves and hedges. The vulture and the eagle are seen wheeling about the mountain cliffs and soaring over the plains, and groups of shy bustards stalk about the heaths, but the myriads of smaller birds, which

animate the whole face of other countries, are met with in but few provinces of Spain, and in them chiefly among the orchards and gardens which surround the habitations of man.

In the exterior provinces, the traveler occasionally traverses great tracts cultivated with grain as far as the eye can reach, waving at times with verdure, at other times naked and sunburned; but he looks round in vain for the hand that has tilled the soil: at length he perceives some village perched on a steep hill, or rugged crag, with mouldering battlements and ruined watch-tower; a stronghold, in old times, against civil war or Moorish inroad; for the custom among the peasantry of congregating together for mutual protection is still kept up in most parts of Spain, in consequence of the marauding of roving freebooters.

But though a great part of Spain is deficient in the garniture of groves and forests, and the softer charms of ornamental cultivation, yet its scenery has something of a high and lofty character to compensate the want. It partakes something of the attributes of its people, and I think that I better understand the proud, hardy, frugal and abstemious Spaniard, his manly defiance of hardships, and contempt of effeminate indulgences, since I have seen the country he inhabits.

There is something, too, in the sternly simple features of the Spanish landscape that impresses on the soul a feeling of sublimity. The immense plains of the Castiles and La Mancha, extending as far as the eye can reach, derive an interest from their very nakedness and immensity, and have something of the solemn grandeur of the ocean. In ranging over these boundless wastes, the eye catches sight, here and there, of a straggling herd of cattle attended by a lonely herdsman, motionless as a statue, with his long slender pike tapering up like a lance into the air; or beholds a long train of mules slowly moving along the waste like a train of camels in the desert, or a single herdsman, armed with blunderbuss and stiletto, and prowling over the plain. Thus, the country, the habits, the very looks of the people, have something

of the Arabian character. The general insecurity of the country is evinced in the universal use of weapons. The herdsman in the field, the shepherd in the plain, has his musket and his knife. The wealthy villager rarely ventures to the market-town without his trabucho, and perhaps a servant on foot with a blunderbuss on his shoulder; and the most petty journey is undertaken with the preparations of a warlike enterprise.

The dangers of the road produce, also, a mode of traveling resembling, on a diminutive scale, the caravans of the East. The arrieros or carriers congregate in troops, and set off in large and well-armed trains on appointed days, while individual travelers swell their number and contribute to their strength. In this primitive way is the commerce of the country carried on. The muleteer is the general medium of traffic, and the legitimate wanderer of the land, traversing the Peninsula from the Pyrenees and the Asturias, to the Alpuxarras, the Serrania de Ronda, and even to the gates of Gibraltar. He lives frugally and hardily; his alforjas (or saddle-bags), of coarse cloth, hold his scanty stock of provisions; a leathern bottle, hanging at his saddle-bow, contains wine or water for a supply across barren mountains and thirsty plains; a mule cloth spread upon the ground is his bed at night, and his pack-saddle is his pillow. His low but clear-limbed and sinewy form betokens strength; his complexion is dark and sunburned; his eye resolute, but quiet in its expression, except when kindled by sudden emotion; his demeanor is frank, manly, and courteous, and he never passes you without a grave salutation—"Dios guarda à usted!"—"Vay usted con Dios caballero!"—"God guard you!"—"God be with you, cavalier!"

As these men have often their whole fortune at stake upon the burden of their mules, they have their weapons at hand, slung to their saddles, and ready to be snatched down for desperate defense. But their united numbers render them secure against petty bands of marauders, and the solitary bandalero, armed to the teeth, and mounted on his

Andalusian steed, hovers about them, like a pirate about a merchant convoy, without daring to make an assault.

The Spanish muleteer has an inexhaustible stock of songs and ballads, with which to beguile his incessant wayfaring. The airs are rude and simple, consisting of but few inflexions. These he chants forth with a loud voice, and long drawling cadence, seated sidewise on his mule, who seems to listen with infinite gravity, and to keep time with his paces, to the tune. The couplets thus chanted are often old traditional romances about the Moors; or some legend of a saint; or some love ditty; or, what is still more frequent, some ballad about a bold contrabandista, or hardy bandalero; for the smuggler and the robber are poetical heroes among the common people of Spain. Often the song of the muleteer is composed at the instant, and relates to some local scene or some incident of the journey. This talent of singing and improvising is frequent in Spain, and is said to have been inherited from the Moors. There is something wildly pleasing in listening to these ditties among the rude and lonely scenes they illustrate, accompanied as they are by the occasional jingle of the mule-bell.

It has a most picturesque effect, also, to meet a train of muleteers in some mountain pass. First you hear the bells of the leading mules, breaking with their simple melody the stillness of the airy height; or, perhaps, the voice of the muleteer admonishing some tardy or wandering animal, or chanting, at the full stretch of his lungs, some traditionary ballad. At length you see the mules slowly winding along the cragged defile, sometimes descending precipitous cliffs, so as to present themselves in full relief against the sky, sometimes toiling up the deep arid chasms below you. As they approach, you descry their gay decorations of worsted tufts, tassels, and saddle-cloths; while, as they pass by, the ever-ready trabucho, slung behind their packs and saddles, gives a hint of the insecurity of the road.

The ancient kingdom of Granada, into which we are about to penetrate, is one of the most mountainous regions of Spain.



DANCING THE FANDANGO.

Irving, Vol. Two, p. 16.

Vast sierras or chains of mountains, destitute of shrub or tree, and mottled with variegated marbles and granites, elevate their sunburned summits against a deep blue sky, yet in their rugged bosoms lie engulfed the most verdant and fertile valley, where the desert and the garden strive for mastery, and the very rock, as it were, compelled to yield the fig, the orange, and the citron, and to blossom with the myrtle and the rose.

In the wild passes of these mountains, the sight of walled towns and villages built like eagles' nests among the cliffs, and surrounded by Moorish battlements, or of ruined watch-towers perched on lofty peaks, carry the mind back to the chivalrous days of Christian and Moslem warfare, and to the romantic struggle for the conquest of Granada. In traversing their lofty sierras, the traveler is often obliged to alight and lead his horse up and down the steep and jagged ascents and descents, resembling the broken steps of a staircase. Sometimes the road winds along dizzy precipices, without parapet to guard him from the gulfs below, and then will plunge down steep and dark and dangerous declivities. Sometimes it struggles through rugged barrancos, or ravines, worn by water torrents, the obscure paths of the contrabandista; while ever and anon, the ominous cross, the memento of robbery and murder, erected on a mound of stones at some lonely part of the road, admonishes the traveler that he is among the haunts of banditti; perhaps, at that very moment, under the eye of some lurking bandalero. Sometimes, in winding through the narrow valleys, he is startled by a hoarse bellowing, and beholds above him, on some green fold of the mountain side, a herd of fierce Andalusian bulls, destined for the combat of the arena. There is something awful in the contemplation of these terrific animals, clothed with tremendous strength, and ranging their native pastures, in untamed wildness: strangers almost to the face of man. They know no one but the solitary herdsman who attends upon them, and even he at times dares not venture to approach them. The low bellowings of these

bulls, and their menacing aspect as they look down from their rocky height, give additional wildness to the savage scenery around.

I have been betrayed unconsciously into a longer disquisition than I had intended on the several features of Spanish traveling; but there is a romance about all the recollections of the Peninsula that is dear to the imagination.

It was on the first of May that my companion and myself set forth from Seville, on our route to Granada. We had made all due preparations for the nature of our journey, which lay through mountainous regions where the roads are little better than mere mule paths, and too frequently beset by robbers. The most valuable part of our luggage had been forwarded by the arrieros; we retained merely clothing and necessaries for the journey, and money for the expenses of the road, with a sufficient surplus of the latter to satisfy the expectations of robbers, should we be assailed, and to save ourselves from the rough treatment that awaits the too wary and empty-handed traveler. A couple of stout hired steeds were provided for ourselves, and a third for our scanty luggage and for the conveyance of a sturdy Biscayan lad of about twenty years of age, who was to guide us through the perplexed mazes of the mountain roads, to take care of our horses, to act occasionally as our valet, and at all times as our guard; for he had a formidable trabucho, or carbine, to defend us from rateros, or solitary footpads, about which weapon he made much vainglorious boast, though, to the discredit of his generalship, I must say that it generally hung unloaded behind his saddle. He was, however, a faithful, cheery, kind-hearted creature, as full of saws and proverbs as that miracle of squires, the renowned Sancho himself, whose name we bestowed upon him; and, like a true Spaniard, though treated by us with companionable familiarity, he never for a moment in his utmost hilarity outstripped the bounds of respectful decorum.

Thus equipped and attended, we set out on our journey with a genuine disposition to be pleased: with such a disposi-

tion, what a country is Spain for a traveler, where the most miserable inn is as full of adventure as an enchanted castle, and every meal is in itself an achievement! Let others repine at the lack of turnpike roads and sumptuous hotels, and all the elaborate comforts of a country cultivated into tameness and common-place, but give me the rude mountain scramble, the roving haphazard wayfaring, the frank, hospitable, though half-wild manners, that give such a true game flavor to romantic Spain!

Our first evening's entertainment had a relish of the kind. We arrived after sunset at a little town among the hills, after a fatiguing journey over a wide houseless plain, where we had been repeatedly drenched with showers. In the inn were quartered a party of Miguelistas, who were patrolling the country in pursuit of robbers. The appearance of foreigners like ourselves was unusual in this remote town. Mine host with two or three old gossiping comrades in brown cloaks studied our passports in a corner of the posada, while an alguazil took notes by the dim light of a lamp. The passports were in foreign languages and perplexed them, but our Squire Sancho assisted them in their studies, and magnified our importance with the grandiloquence of a Spaniard. In the meantime the magnificent distribution of a few cigars had won the hearts of all around us. In a little while the whole community seemed put in agitation to make us welcome. The corregidor himself waited upon us, and a great rush-bottomed armed-chair was ostentatiously bolstered into our room by our landlady, for the accommodation of that important personage. The commander of the patrol took supper with us: a surly, talking, laughing, swaggering Andaluz, who had made a campaign in South America, and recounted his exploits in love and war with much pomp of praise and vehemence of gesticulation and mysterious rolling of the eye. He told us he had a list of all the robbers in the country, and meant to ferret out every mother's son of them; he offered us at the same time some of his soldiers as an escort. "One is enough to protect you, signors; the robbers

know me, and know my men; the sight of one is enough to spread terror through a whole sierra." We thanked him for his offer, but assured him, in his own strain, that with the protection of our redoubtable Squire Sancho we were not afraid of all the ladrones of Andalusia.

While we were supping with our Andalusian friend, we heard the notes of a guitar and the click of castanets, and presently a chorus of voices, singing a popular air. In fact, mine host had gathered together the amateur singers and musicians and the rustic belles of the neighborhood, and on going forth, the courtyard of the inn presented a scene of true Spanish festivity. We took our seats, with mine host and hostess and the commander of the patrol, under the archway of the court. The guitar passed from hand to hand, but a jovial shoemaker was the Orpheus of the place. He was a pleasant looking fellow with huge black whiskers and a roguish eye. His sleeves were rolled up to his elbows; he touched the guitar with masterly skill, and sang little amorous ditties with an expressive leer at the women, with whom he was evidently a favorite. He afterward danced a fandango with a buxom Andalusian damsel, to the great delight of the spectators. But none of the females present could compare with mine host's pretty daughter Josefa, who had slipped away and made her toilette for the occasion, and had adorned her head with roses; and also distinguished herself in a bolero with a handsome young dragoon. We had ordered our host to let wine and refreshments circulate freely among the company, yet, though there was a motley assemblage of soldiers, muleteers and villagers, no one exceeded the bounds of sober enjoyment. The scene was a study for a painter: the picturesque group of dancers; the troopers in their half military dresses, the peasantry wrapped in their brown cloaks, nor must I omit to mention the old meager alguazil in a short black cloak, who took no notice of anything going on, but sat in a corner diligently writing by the dim light of a huge copper lamp that might have figured in the days of Don Quixote.

I am not writing a regular narrative, and do not pretend to give the varied events of several days' rambling over hill and dale, and moor and mountain. We traveled in true contrabandista style, taking everything, rough and smooth, as we found it, and mingling with all classes and conditions in a kind of vagabond companionship. It is the true way to travel in Spain. Knowing the scanty larders of the inns, and the naked tracts of country the traveler has often to traverse, we had taken care, on starting, to have the alforjas, or saddle-bags, of our squire well stocked with cold provisions, and his beta, or leathern bottle, which was of portly dimensions, filled to the neck with choice Valdepenas wine. As this was a munition for our campaign more important than even his trabucho, we exhorted him to have an eye to it, and I will do him the justice to say that his namesake, the trencher-loving Sancho himself, could not excel him as a provident purveyor. Though the alforjas and beta were repeatedly and vigorously assailed throughout the journey, they appeared to have a miraculous property of being never empty; for our vigilant squire took care to sack everything that remained from our evening repasts at the inns, to supply our next day's luncheon.

What luxurious noontide repasts have we made on the green sward by the side of a brook or fountain under a shady tree, and then what delicious siestas on our cloaks spread out on the herbage!

We paused one day at noon, for a repast of the kind. It was in a pleasant little green meadow, surrounded by hills covered with olive trees. Our cloaks were spread on the grass under an elm tree, by the side of a babbling rivulet: our horses were tethered where they might crop the herbage, and Sancho produced his alforjas with an air of triumph. They contained the contributions of four days' journeying, but had been signally enriched by the foraging of the previous evening, in a plenteous inn at Antequera. Our squire drew forth the heterogeneous contents one by one, and they seemed to have no end. First came forth a shoulder of

roasted kid, very little the worse for wear, then an entire partridge, then a great morsel of salted codfish wrapped in paper, then the residue of a ham, then the half of a pullet, together with several rolls of bread and a rabble route of oranges, figs, raisins and walnuts. His beta also had been recruited with some excellent wine of Malaga. At every fresh apparition from his larder, he could enjoy our ludicrous surprise, throwing himself back on the grass and shouting with laughter.

Nothing pleased this simple hearted varlet more than to be compared, for his devotion to the trencher, to the renowned squire of Don Quixote. He was well versed in the history of the Don, and, like most of the common people of Spain, he firmly believed it to be a true history.

"All that, however, happened a long time ago, signor," said he to me, one day, with an inquiring look.

"A very long time," was the reply.

"I dare say, more than a thousand years?"—still looking dubiously.

"I dare say? not less."

The squire was satisfied.

As we were making our repast above described, and diverting ourselves with the simple drollery of our squire, a solitary beggar approached us, who had almost the look of a pilgrim. He was evidently very old, with a gray beard, and supported himself on a staff, yet age had not borne him down; he was tall and erect, and had the wreck of a fine form. He wore a round Andalusian hat, a sheepskin jacket, and leathern breeches, gaiters and sandals. His dress, though old and patched, was decent, his demeanor manly, and he addressed us with that grave courtesy that is to be remarked in the lowest Spaniard. We were in a favorable mood for such a visitor, and in a freak of capricious charity gave him some silver, a loaf of fine wheaten bread, and a goblet of our choice wine of Malaga. He received them thankfully, but without any groveling tribute of gratitude. Tasting the wine, he held it up to the light, with a slight

beam of surprise in his eye; then quaffing it off at a draught: "It is many years," said he, "since I have tasted such wine. It is a cordial to an old man's heart." Then looking at the beautiful wheaten loaf: "Bendita sea tal pan!" (blessed be such bread!) So saying, he put it in his wallet. We urged him to eat it on the spot. "No, signors," replied he, "the wine I had to drink, or leave; but the bread I must take home to share with my family."

Our man Sancho sought our eye, and reading permission there, gave the old man some of the ample fragments of our repast; on condition, however, that he should sit down and make a meal. He accordingly took his seat at some little distance from us, and began to eat, slowly, and with a sobriety and decorum that would have become a hidalgo. There was altogether a measured manner and a quiet self-possession about the old man that made me think he had seen better days; his language, too, though simple, had occasionally something picturesque and almost poetical in the phraseology. I set him down for some broken-down cavalier. I was mistaken, it was nothing but the innate courtesy of a Spaniard, and the poetical turn of thought and language often to be found in the lowest classes of this clear-witted people. For fifty years, he told us, he had been a shepherd, but now he was out of employ and destitute. "When I was a young man," said he, "nothing could harm or trouble me. I was always well, always gay; but now I am seventy-nine years of age, and a beggar, and my heart begins to fail me."

Still he was not a regular mendicant, it was not until recently that want had driven him to this degradation, and he gave a touching picture of the struggle between hunger and pride, when abject destitution first came upon him. He was returning from Malaga, without money; he had not tasted food for some time, and was crossing one of the great plains of Spain, where there were but few habitations. When almost dead with hunger, he applied at the door of a venta, or country inn. "Perdona usted per Dios her-

mano!" (excuse us, brother, for God's sake!) was the reply; —the usual mode in Spain of refusing a beggar. "I turned away," said he, "with shame greater than my hunger, for my heart was yet too proud. I came to a river with high banks and deep rapid current, and felt tempted to throw myself in; what should such an old worthless wretched man as I live for! But, when I was on the brink of the current, I thought on the Blessed Virgin, and turned away. I traveled on until I saw a country-seat, at a little distance from the road, and entered the outer gate of the courtyard. The door was shut, but there were two young signoras at a window. I approached, and begged: 'Perdona usted per Dios hermano!' (excuse us, brother, for God's sake!) and the window closed. I crept out of the courtyard; but hunger overcame me, and my heart gave way. I thought my hour was at hand. So I laid myself down at the gate, commended myself to the holy Virgin, and covered my head to die. In a little while afterward, the master of the house came home. Seeing me lying at his gate, he uncovered my head, had pity on my gray hairs, took me into his house, and gave me food. So, signors, you see that we should always put confidence in the protection of the Virgin."

The old man was on his way to his native place Archidona, which was close by the summit of a steep and rugged mountain. He pointed to the ruins of its old Moorish castle. That castle, he said, was inhabited by a Moorish king at the time of the wars of Granada. Queen Isabella invaded it with a great army, but the king looked down from his castle among the clouds, and laughed her to scorn. Upon this, the Virgin appeared to the queen, and guided her and her army up a mysterious path of the mountain, which had never before been known. When the Moor saw her coming, he was astonished, and springing with his horse from a precipice, was dashed to pieces. The marks of his horse's hoofs, said the old man, are to be seen on the margin of the rock to this day. And see, signors, yonder is the road by which the queen and her army mounted; you see it like a ribbon up the

mountain side; but the miracle is, that, though it can be seen at a distance, when you come near it disappears. The ideal road to which he pointed was evidently a sandy ravine of the mountain, which looked narrow and defined at a distance, but became broad and indistinct on an approach. As the old man's heart warmed with wine and wassail, he went on to tell us a story of the buried treasure left under the earth by the Moorish king. His own house was next to the foundations of the castle. The curate and notary dreamed three times of the treasure, and went to work at the place pointed out in their dreams. His own son-in-law heard the sound of their pick-axes and spades at night. What they found nobody knows; they became suddenly rich, but kept their own secret. Thus the old man had once been next door to fortune, but was doomed never to get under the same roof.

I have remarked that the stories of treasure buried by the Moors, which prevail throughout Spain, are most current among the poorest people. It is thus kind nature consoles with shadows for the lack of substantials. The thirsty man dreams of fountains and roaring streams, the hungry man of ideal banquets, and the poor man of heaps of hidden gold; nothing certainly is more magnificent than the imagination of a beggar.

The last traveling sketch which I shall give is a curious scene at the little city of Loxa. This was a famous belligerent frontier post, in the time of the Moors, and repulsed Ferdinand from its walls. It was the stronghold of old Ali Atar, the father-in-law of Boabdil, when that fiery veteran sallied forth, with his son-in-law, on that disastrous inroad that ended in the death of the chieftain and the capture of the monarch. Loxa is wildly situated in a broken mountain pass, on the banks of the Xenil, among rocks and groves, and meadows and gardens. The people seem still to retain the bold fiery spirit of the olden time. Our inn was suited to the place. It was kept by a young, handsome, Andalusian widow, whose trim busquina of black silk fringed with bugles set off the play of a graceful form and round pliant

limbs. Her step was firm and elastic, her dark eye was full of fire, and the coquetry of her air, and varied ornaments of her person, showed that she was accustomed to be admired.

She was well matched by a brother, nearly about her own age; they were perfect models of the Andalusian *majo* and *maja*. He was tall, vigorous, and well formed, with a clear, olive complexion, a dark beaming eye, and curling, chestnut whiskers that met under his chin. He was gallantly dressed in a short green velvet jacket, fitted to his shape, profusely decorated with silver buttons, with a white handkerchief in each pocket. He had breeches of the same, with rows of buttons from the hips to the knees; a pink silk handkerchief round his neck, gathered through a ring, on the bosom of a neatly plaited shirt; a sash round the waist to match; bottinas or spatterdashes of the finest russet leather, elegantly worked and open at the calves to show his stockings, and russet shoes setting off a well-shaped foot.

As he was standing at the door, a horseman rode up and entered into low and earnest conversation with him. He was dressed in similar style, and almost with equal finery. A man about thirty, square built, with strong Roman features, handsome, though slightly pitted with the small-pox, with a free, bold, and somewhat daring air. His powerful black horse was decorated with tassels and fanciful trappings, and a couple of broad-mouthed blunderbusses hung behind the saddle. He had the air of those contrabandistas that I have seen in the mountains of Ronda, and, evidently, had a good understanding with the brother of mine hostess; nay, if I mistake not, he was a favorite admirer of the widow. In fact, the whole inn and its inmates had something of a contrabandista aspect, and the blunderbuss stood in a corner beside the guitar. The horseman I have mentioned passed his evening in the posada, and sang several bold mountain romances with great spirit.

As we were at supper, two poor Asturians put in in distress, begging food and a night's lodging. They had been

waylaid by robbers as they came from a fair among the mountains, robbed of a horse, which carried all their stock in trade, stripped of their money and most of their apparel, beaten for having offered resistance, and left almost naked in the road. My companion, with a prompt generosity, natural to him, ordered them a supper and a bed, and gave them a supply of money to help them forward toward their home.

As the evening advanced, the *dramatis personæ* thickened. A large man, about sixty years of age, of powerful frame, came strolling in, to gossip with mine hostess. He was dressed in the ordinary Andalusian costume, but had a huge saber tucked under his arm, wore large mustaches and had something of a lofty swaggering air. Every one seemed to regard him with great deference.

Our man, Sancho, whispered to us that he was Don Ventura Rodriguez, the hero and champion of Loxa, famous for his prowess and the strength of his arm. In the time of the French invasion he surprised six troopers who were asleep. He first secured their horses, then attacked them with his saber; killed some, and took the rest prisoners. For this exploit, the king allows him a *peceta* (the fifth of a duro, or dollar) per day, and has dignified him with the title of Don.

I was amused to notice his swelling language and demeanor. He was evidently a thorough Andalusian, boastful as he was brave. His saber was always in his hand, or under his arm. He carries it always about with him as a child does a doll, calls it his Santa Teresa, and says that when he draws it "*tembla la tierra!*" (the earth trembles!)

I sat until a late hour listening to the varied themes of this motley group, who mingled together with the unreserve of a Spanish *posada*. We had *contrabandista* songs, stories of robbers, guerrilla exploits, and Moorish legends. The last one from our handsome landlady, who gave a poetical account of the *infiernos*, or infernal regions of Loxa—dark caverns, in which subterraneous streams and waterfalls make a mysterious sound. The common people say they

are money coiners, shut up there from the time of the Moors, and that the Moorish kings kept their treasures in these caverns.

Were it the purport of this work, I could fill its pages with the incidents and scenes of our rambling expedition, but other themes invite me. Journeying in this manner, we at length emerged from the mountains, and entered upon the beautiful Vega of Granada. Here we took our last midday's repast under a grove of olive trees, on the borders of a rivulet, with the old Moorish capital in the distance, dominated by the ruddy towers of the Alhambra, while far above it the snowy summits of the Sierra Nevada shone like silver. The day was without a cloud, and the heat of the sun tempered by cool breezes from the mountains; after our repast, we spread our cloaks and took our last siesta, lulled by the humming of bees among the flowers, and the notes of the ring-doves from the neighboring olive trees. When the sultry hours were past we resumed our journey, and after passing between hedges of aloes and Indian figs, and through a wilderness of gardens, arrived about sunset at the gates of Granada.

GOVERNMENT OF THE ALHAMBRA

To the traveler imbued with a feeling for the historical and poetical, the Alhambra of Granada is as much an object of veneration as is the Caaba, or sacred house of Mecca, to all true Moslem pilgrims. How many legends and traditions, true and fabulous, how many songs and romances, Spanish and Arabian, of love and war and chivalry, are associated with this romantic pile! The reader may judge, therefore, of our delight, when, shortly after our arrival in Granada, the governor of Alhambra gave us permission to occupy his vacant apartments in the Moorish palace. My companion was soon summoned away by the duties of his station, but I remained for several months spell-bound in the old enchanted pile. The following papers are the result of

my reveries and researches, during that delicious thralldom. If they have the power of imparting any of the witching charms of the place to the imagination of the reader, he will not repine at lingering with me for a season in the legendary halls of the Alhambra.

THE Alhambra is an ancient fortress or castellated palace of the Moorish kings of Granada, where they held dominion over this their boasted terrestrial paradise, and made their last stand for empire in Spain. The palace occupies but a portion of the fortress, the walls of which, studded with towers, stretch irregularly round the whole crest of a lofty hill that overlooks the city, and forms a spire of the Sierra Nevada, or Snowy Mountain.

In the time of the Moors, the fortress was capable of containing an army of forty thousand men within its precincts, and served occasionally as a stronghold of the sovereigns against their rebellious subjects. After the kingdom had passed into the hands of the Christians, the Alhambra continued a royal demesne, and was occasionally inhabited by the Castilian monarchs. The Emperor Charles V. began a sumptuous palace within its walls, but was deterred from completing it by repeated shocks of earthquakes. The last royal residents were Philip V. and his beautiful Queen Elizabeth, of Parma, early in the eighteenth century.

Great preparations were made for their reception. The palace and gardens were placed in a state of repair; and a new suite of apartments erected, and decorated by artists brought from Italy. The sojourn of the sovereigns was transient; and, after their departure, the palace once more became desolate. Still the place was maintained with some military state. The governor held it immediately from the crown: its jurisdiction extended down into the suburbs of the city, and was independent of the captain-general of Granada. A considerable garrison was kept up; the governor had his apartments in the old Moorish palace, and never descended into Granada without some military parade. The fortress, in fact, was a little town of itself, having several

streets of houses within its walls, together with a Franciscan convent and a parochial church.

The desertion of the court, however, was a fatal blow to the Alhambra. Its beautiful walls became desolate, and some of them fell to ruin; the gardens were destroyed, and the fountains ceased to play. By degrees the dwellings became filled up with a loose and lawless population; *contrabandistas*, who availed themselves of its independent jurisdiction to carry on a wide and daring course of smuggling, and thieves and rogues of all sorts, who made this their place of refuge, from whence they might depredate upon Granada and its vicinity. The strong arm of government at length interposed. The whole community was thoroughly sifted; none were suffered to remain but such as were of honest character and had legitimate right to a residence; the greater part of the houses were demolished, and a mere hamlet left, with the parochial church and the Franciscan convent.

During the recent troubles in Spain, when Granada was in the hands of the French, the Alhambra was garrisoned by their troops, and the palace was occasionally inhabited by the French commander. With that enlightened taste which has ever distinguished the French nation in their conquests, this monument of Moorish elegance and grandeur was rescued from the absolute ruin and desolation that were overwhelming it. The roofs were repaired, the saloons and galleries protected from the weather, the gardens cultivated, the water-courses restored, the fountains once more made to throw up their sparkling showers: and Spain may thank her invaders for having preserved to her the most beautiful and interesting of her historical monuments.

On the departure of the French, they blew up several towers of the outer wall, and left the fortifications scarcely tenable. Since that time the military importance of the post is at an end. The garrison is a handful of invalid soldiers, whose principal duty is to guard some of the outer towers, which serve, occasionally, as a prison of state; and the governor, abandoning the lofty hill of the Alhambra, resides in

the center of Granada, for the more convenient dispatch of his official duties. I cannot conclude this brief notice of the state of the fortress, without bearing testimony to the honorable exertions of its present commander, Don Francisco de Salis Serna, who is tasking all the limited resources at his command to put the palace in a state of repair; and by his judicious precautions has for some time arrested its too certain decay. Had his predecessors discharged the duties of their station with equal fidelity, the Alhambra might yet have remained in almost its pristine beauty; were government to second him with means equal to his zeal, this edifice might still be preserved to adorn the land, and to attract the curious and enlightened of every clime, for many generations.

INTERIOR OF THE ALHAMBRA

THE Alhambra has been so often and so minutely described by travelers that a mere sketch will probably be sufficient for the reader to refresh his recollection; I will give, therefore, a brief account of our visit to it the morning after our arrival in Granada.

Leaving our posada of La Espada, we traversed the renowned square of the Vivarrambla, once the scene of Moorish jousts and tournaments, now a crowded market-place. From thence we proceeded along the Zacatin, the main street of what was the great Bazaar, in the time of the Moors, where the small shops and narrow alleys still retain their Oriental character. Crossing an open place in front of the palace of the captain-general, we ascended a confined and winding street, the name of which reminded us of the chivalric days of Granada. It is called the *Calle*, or street of the Gomeres: from a Moorish family, famous in chronicle and song. This street led up to a mansion gate-

way of Grecian architecture, built by Charles V., forming the entrance to the domains of the Alhambra.

At the gate were two or three ragged and superannuated soldiers dozing on a stone bench, the successors of the Zegris and the Abencerrages; while a tall, meager varlet, whose rusty brown cloak was, evidently, intended to conceal the ragged state of his nether garments, was lounging in the sunshine, and gossiping with an ancient sentinel on duty. He joined us as we entered the gate, and offered his services to show us the fortress.

I have a traveler's dislike to officious ciceroni, and did not altogether like the garb of the applicant:

"You are well acquainted with the place, I presume?"

"Ninguno mas—pues, señor, soy hijo de la Alhambra."

(Nobody better—in fact, sir, I am a son of the Alhambra.)

The common Spaniards have certainly a most poetical way of expressing themselves—"A son of the Alhambra": the appellation caught me at once, the very tattered garb of my new acquaintance assumed a dignity in my eyes. It was emblematic of the features of the place, and became the progeny of a ruin.

I put some further questions to him, and found his title was legitimate. His family had lived in the fortress from generation to generation ever since the time of the conquest. His name was Mateo Ximenes. "Then, perhaps," said I, "you may be a descendant from the great Cardinal Ximenes."

"Dios sabe! God knows, señor. It may be so. We are the oldest family in the Alhambra. *Viejos Cristianos*, old Christians, without any taint of Moor or Jew. I know we belong to some great family or other, but I forget who. My father knows all about it. He has the coat of arms hanging up in his cottage, up in the fortress."—There is never a Spaniard, however poor, but has some claim to high pedigree. The first title of this ragged worthy, however, had completely captivated me, so I gladly accepted the services of the "son of the Alhambra."

We now found ourselves in a deep narrow ravine, filled with beautiful groves, with a steep avenue and various foot-paths winding through it, bordered with stone seats and ornamented with fountains. To our left, we beheld the towers of the Alhambra beetling above us; to our right, on the opposite side of the ravine, we were equally dominated by rival towers on a rocky eminence. These, we were told, were the Torres Vermejos, or Vermilion towers, so called from their ruddy hue. No one knows their origin. They are of a date much anterior to the Alhambra. Some suppose them to have been built by the Romans; others, by some wandering colony of Phœnicians. Ascending the steep and shady avenue, we arrived at the foot of a huge square Moorish tower, forming a kind of barbican, through which passed the main entrance to the fortress. Within the barbican was another group of veteran invalids, one mounting guard at the portal, while the rest, wrapped in their tattered cloaks, slept on the stone benches. This portal is called the Gate of Justice, from the tribunal held within its porch during the Moslem domination, for the immediate trial of petty causes; a custom common to the Oriental nations, and occasionally alluded to in the sacred Scriptures.

The great vestibule, or porch of the gate, is formed by an immense Arabian arch of the horseshoe form, which springs to half the height of the tower. On the keystone of this arch is engraven a gigantic hand. Within the vestibule, on the keystone of the portal, is engraven, in like manner, a gigantic key. Those who pretend to some knowledge of Mahometan symbols, affirm that the hand is the emblem of doctrine, and the key, of faith; the latter, they add, was emblazoned on the standard of the Moslems when they subdued Andalusia, in opposition to the Christian emblem of the cross. A different explanation, however, was given by the legitimate "son of the Alhambra," and one more in unison with the notions of the common people, who attach something of mystery and magic to everything Moorish, and

have all kinds of superstitions connected with this old Moslem fortress.

According to Mateo, it was a tradition handed down from the oldest inhabitants, and which he had from his father and grandfather, that the hand and key were magical devices on which the fate of the Alhambra depended. The Moorish king who built it was a great magician, and, as some believed, had sold himself to the devil, and had laid the whole fortress under a magic spell. By this means it had remained standing for several hundred years, in defiance of storms and earthquakes, while almost all the other buildings of the Moors had fallen to ruin and disappeared. The spell, the tradition went on to say, would last until the hand on the outer arch should reach down and grasp the key, when the whole pile would tumble to pieces, and all the treasures buried beneath it by the Moors would be revealed.

Notwithstanding this ominous prediction, we ventured to pass through the spell-bound gateway, feeling some little assurance against magic art in the protection of the Virgin, a statue of whom we observed above the portal.

After passing through the Barbican, we ascended a narrow lane, winding between walls, and came on an open esplanade within the fortress, called the Plaza de los Aljibes, or Place of the Cisterns, from great reservoirs which undermine it, cut in the living rock by the Moors, for the supply of the fortress. Here, also, is a well of immense depth, furnishing the purest and coldest of water--another monument of the delicate taste of the Moors, who were indefatigable in their exertions to obtain that element in its crystal purity.

In front of this esplanade is the splendid pile commenced by Charles V., intended, it is said, to eclipse the residence of the Moslem kings. With all its grandeur and architectural merit, it appeared to us like an arrogant intrusion, and passing by it we entered a simple unostentatious portal, opening into the interior of the Moorish palace.

The transition was almost magical; it seemed as if we were at once transported into other times and another realm,

and were treading the scenes of Arabian story. We found ourselves in a great court paved with white marble and decorated at each end with light Moorish peristyles. It is called the court of the Alberca. In the center was an immense basin, or fish-pool, a hundred and thirty feet in length, by thirty in breadth, stocked with gold-fish, and bordered by hedges of roses. At the upper end of this court rose the great tower of Comares.

From the lower end we passed through a Moorish archway into the renowned Court of Lions. There is no part of the edifice that gives us a more complete idea of its original beauty and magnificence than this; for none has suffered so little from the ravages of time. In the center stands the fountain famous in song and story. The alabaster basins still shed their diamond drops, and the twelve lions which support them cast forth their crystal streams as in the days of Boabdil. The court is laid out in flower beds, and surrounded by light Arabian arcades of open filigree work, supported by slender pillars of white marble. The architecture, like that of all the other parts of the palace, is characterized by elegance rather than grandeur, bespeaking a delicate and graceful taste, and a disposition to indolent enjoyment. When we look upon the fairy tracery of the peristyles, and the apparently fragile fretwork of the walls, it is difficult to believe that so much has survived the wear and tear of centuries, the shocks of earthquakes, the violence of war, and the quiet, though no less baneful, pilferings of the tasteful traveler. It is almost sufficient to excuse the popular tradition, that the whole is protected by a magic charm.

On one side of the court, a portal richly adorned opens into a lofty hall paved with white marble, and called the Hall of the two Sisters. A cupola or lantern admits a tempered light from above, and a free circulation of air. The lower part of the walls is incrustated with beautiful Moorish tiles, on some of which are emblazoned the escutcheons of the Moorish monarchs: the upper part is faced with the fine stucco work invented at Damascus, consisting of large plates

cast in molds and artfully joined, so as to have the appearance of having been laboriously sculptured by the hand into light relievos and fanciful arabesques, intermingled with texts of the Koran, and poetical inscriptions in Arabian and Celtic characters. These decorations of the walls and cupolas are richly gilded, and the interstices paneled with lapis lazuli and other brilliant and enduring colors. On each side of the wall are recesses for ottomans and arches. Above an inner porch is a balcony which communicated with the women's apartment. The latticed balconies still remain, from whence the dark-eyed beauties of the harem might gaze unseen upon the entertainments of the hall below.

It is impossible to contemplate this once favorite abode of Oriental manners, without feeling the early associations of Arabian romance, and almost expecting to see the white arm of some mysterious princess beckoning from the balcony, or some dark eye sparkling through the lattice. The abode of beauty is here, as if it had been inhabited but yesterday — but where are the Zoraydas and Linderaxas!

On the opposite side of the Court of Lions is the hall of the Abencerrages, so called from the gallant cavaliers of that illustrious line, who were here perfidiously massacred. There are some who doubt the whole truth of this story, but our humble attendant, Mateo, pointed out the very wicket of the portal through which they are said to have been introduced, one by one, and the white marble fountain in the center of the hall where they were beheaded. He showed us also certain broad ruddy stains in the pavement, traces of their blood, which, according to popular belief, can never be effaced. Finding we listened to him with easy faith, he added that there was often heard at night, in the Court of the Lions, a low confused sound, resembling the murmurings of a multitude; with now and then a faint tinkling, like the distant clank of chains. These noises are probably produced by the bubbling currents and tinkling falls of water, conducted under the pavement through pipes and channels to supply the fountains; but according to the legend of the son of the

Alhambra, they are made by the spirits of the murdered Abencerrages, who nightly haunt the scene of their suffering, and invoke the vengeance of Heaven on their destroyer.

From the Court of Lions we retraced our steps through the Court of the Alberca, or great fish-pool, crossing which, we proceeded to the tower of Comares, so called from the name of the Arabian architect. It is of massive strength, and lofty height, domineering over the rest of the edifice, and overhanging the steep hillside, which descends abruptly to the banks of the Darro. A Moorish archway admitted us into a vast and lofty hall, which occupies the interior of the tower, and was the grand audience chamber of the Moslem monarchs, thence called the Hall of Ambassadors. It still bears the traces of past magnificence. The walls are richly stuccoed and decorated with arabesques, the vaulted ceilings of cedar wood, almost lost in obscurity from its height, still gleam with rich gilding and the brilliant tints of the Arabian pencil. On three sides of the saloon are deep windows, cut through the immense thickness of the walls, the balconies of which, looking down upon the verdant valley of the Darro, and the streets and convents of the Albaycin, command a prospect of the distant Vega. I might go on to describe the other delightful apartments of this side of the palace; the Tocador or toilet of the queen, an open belvedere on the summit of the tower, where the Moorish sultanas enjoyed the pure breezes from the mountain and the prospect of the surrounding paradise. The secluded little patio or garden of Lindaraxa, with its alabaster fountain, its thickets of roses and myrtles, of citrons and oranges. The cool halls and grottoes of the baths, where the glare and heat of day are tempered into a self mysterious light and a pervading freshness. But I appear to dwell minutely on these scenes. My object is merely to give the reader a general introduction into an abode, where, if disposed, he may linger and loiter with me through the remainder of this work, gradually becoming familiar with all its beauties.

An abundant supply of water, brought from the moun-

tains by old Moorish aqueducts, circulates throughout the palace, supplying its baths and fish-pools, sparkling in jets within its halls, or murmuring in channels along the marble pavements. When it has paid its tribute to the royal pile, and visited its gardens and pastures, it flows down the long avenue leading to the city, tinkling in rills, gushing in fountains, and maintaining a perpetual verdure in those groves that embower and beautify the whole hill of the Alhambra.

Those, only, who have sojourned in the ardent climates of the South can appreciate the delights of an abode combining the breezy coolness of the mountain with the freshness and verdure of the valley.

While the city below pants with the noon-tide heat, and the parched Vega trembles to the eye, the delicate airs from the Sierra Nevada play through the lofty halls, bringing with them the sweetness of the surrounding gardens. Everything invites to that indolent repose, the bliss of Southern climes; and while the half-shut eye looks out from shaded balconies upon the glittering landscape, the ear is lulled by the rustling of groves and the murmur of running streams.

THE TOWER OF COMARES

THE reader has had a sketch of the interior of the Alhambra, and may be desirous of a general idea of its vicinity. The morning is serene and lovely; the sun has not gained sufficient power to destroy the freshness of the night; we will mount to the summit of the tower of Comares, and take a bird's-eye view of Granada and its environs.

Come, then, worthy reader and comrade, follow my steps into this vestibule ornamented with rich tracery, which opens to the Hall of Ambassadors. We will not enter the hall, however, but turn to the left, to this small door, opening in the wall. Have a care! here are steep winding steps

and but scanty light. Yet, up this narrow, obscure and winding staircase the proud monarchs of Granada and their queens have often ascended to the battlements of the tower to watch the approach of Christian armies; or to gaze on the battles in the Vega. At length we are upon the terraced roof, and may take breath for a moment, while we cast a general eye over the splendid panorama of city and country, of rocky mountain, verdant valley and fertile plain; of castle, cathedral, Moorish towers and Gothic domes, crumbling ruins and blooming groves.

Let us approach the battlements and cast our eyes immediately below. See—on this side we have the whole plan of the Alhambra laid open to us, and can look down into its courts and gardens. At the foot of the tower is the Court of the Alberca with its great tank or fish-pool bordered with flowers; and yonder is the Court of Lions, with its famous fountain, and its light Moorish arcades; and in the center of the pile is the little garden of Lindaraxa, buried in the heart of the building, with its roses and citrons and shrubbery of emerald green.

That belt of battlements studded with square towers, straggling round the whole brow of the hill, is the outer boundary of the fortress. Some of the towers, you may perceive, are in ruins, and their massive fragments are buried among vines, fig-trees and aloes.

Let us look on this northern side of the tower. It is a giddy height; the very foundations of the tower rise above the groves of the steep hillside. And see, a long fissure in the massive walls shows that the tower has been rent by some of the earthquakes which from time to time have thrown Granada into consternation; and which, sooner or later, must reduce this crumbling pile to a mere mass of ruin. The deep narrow glen below us, which gradually widens as it opens from the mountains, is the valley of the Darro; you see the little river winding its way under embowered terraces, and among orchards and flower gardens. It is a stream famous in old times for yielding gold,

and its sands are still sifted, occasionally, in search of the precious ore.

Some of those white pavilions which here and there gleam from among groves and vineyards were rustic retreats of the Moors, to enjoy the refreshment of their gardens.

The airy palace, with its tall white towers and long arcades, which breast yon mountain, among pompous groves and hanging gardens, is the Generaliffe, a summer palace of the Moorish kings, to which they resorted during the sultry months, to enjoy a still more breezy region than that of the Alhambra. The naked summit of the height above it, where you behold some shapeless ruins, is the Silla del Moro, or seat of the Moor; so called from having been a retreat of the unfortunate Boabdil, during the time of an insurrection, where he seated himself and looked down mournfully upon his rebellious city.

A murmuring sound of water now and then rises from the valley. It is from the aqueduct of yon Moorish mill nearly at the foot of the hill. The avenue of trees beyond is the Alameda along the bank of the Darro, a favorite resort in evenings, and a rendezvous of lovers in the summer nights, when the guitar may be heard at a late hour from the benches along its walks. At present there are but a few loitering monks to be seen there, and a group of water carriers from the fountain of Avellanos.

You start! 'Tis nothing but a hawk we have frightened from his nest. This old tower is a complete brooding-place for vagrant birds. The swallow and martlet abound in every chink and cranny, and circle about it the whole day long; while at night, when all other birds have gone to rest, the moping owl comes out of its lurking place, and utters its boding cry from the battlements. See how the hawk we have dislodged sweeps away below us, skimming over the tops of the trees, and sailing up to ruins above the Generaliffe.

Let us leave this side of the tower and turn our eyes to the west. Here you behold in the distance a range of moun-



GATEWAY OF THE ALHAMBRA

Irving, Vol. Two, p. 28.

tains bounding the Vega, the ancient barrier between Moslem Granada and the land of the Christians. Among the heights you may still discern warrior towns, whose gray walls and battlements seem of a piece with the rocks on which they are built; while here and there is a solitary atalaya or watch-tower, mounted on some lofty point, and looking down, as if it were from the sky, into the valleys on either side. It was down the defiles of these mountains, by the pass of Lope, that the Christian armies descended into the Vega. It was round the base of yon gray and naked mountain, almost insulated from the rest, and stretching its bald rocky promontory into the bosom of the plain, that the invading squadrons would come bursting into view, with flaunting banners and the clangor of drums and trumpets. How changed is the scene! Instead of the glittering line of mailed warriors, we behold the patient train of the toilful muleteer, slowly moving along the skirts of the mountain.

Behind that promontory is the eventful bridge of Pinos, renowned for many a bloody strife between Moors and Christians; but still more renowned as being the place where Columbus was overtaken and called back by the messenger of Queen Isabella, just as he was departing in despair to carry his project of discovery to the court of France.

Behold another place famous in the history of the discoverer: yon line of walls and towers, gleaming in the morning sun in the very center of the Vega; the city of Santa Fe, built by the Catholic sovereigns during the siege of Granada, after a conflagration had destroyed their camp. It was to these walls that Columbus was called back by the heroic queen, and within them the treaty was concluded that led to the discovery of the Western World.

Here, toward the south, the eye revels on the luxuriant beauties of the Vega; a blooming wilderness of grove and garden, and teeming orchard; with the Xenil winding through it in silver links and feeding innumerable rills, conducted through ancient Moorish channels, which maintain the landscape in perpetual verdure. Here are the be-

loved bowers and gardens and rural retreats for which the Moors fought with such desperate valor. The very farm-houses and hovels which are now inhabited by the boors retain traces of arabesques and other tasteful decorations, which show them to have been elegant residences in the days of the Moslems.

Beyond the embowered region of the Vega you behold, to the south, a line of arid hills down which a long train of mules is slowly moving. It was from the summit of one of those hills that the unfortunate Boabdil cast back his last look upon Granada and gave vent to the agony of his soul. It is the spot famous in song and story, "The last sigh of the Moor."

Now raise your eyes to the snowy summit of yon pile of mountains, shining like a white summer cloud on the blue sky. It is the Sierra Nevada, the pride and delight of Granada; the source of her cooling breezes and perpetual verdure, of her gushing fountains and perennial streams. It is this glorious pile of mountains that gives to Granada that combination of delights so rare in a southern city. The fresh vegetation, and the temperate airs of a northern climate, with the vivifying ardor of a tropical sun and the cloudless azure of a southern sky. It is this aerial treasury of snow, which, melting in proportion to the increase of the summer heat, sends down rivulets and streams through every glen and gorge of the Alpuxarras, diffusing emerald verdure and fertility throughout a chain of happy and sequestered valleys.

These mountains may well be called the glory of Granada. They dominate the whole extent of Andalusia, and may be seen from its most distant parts. The muleteer hails them as he views their frosty peaks from the sultry level of the plain; and the Spanish mariner on the deck of his bark, far, far off, on the bosom of the blue Mediterranean, watches them with a pensive eye, thinks of delightful Granada, and chants in low voice some old romance about the Moors.

But enough, the sun is high above the mountains, and is pouring his full fervor upon our heads. Already the terraced

roof of the town is hot beneath our feet; let us abandon it, and descend and refresh ourselves under the arcades by the fountain of the Lions.

REFLECTIONS

ON THE MOSLEM DOMINATION IN SPAIN

ONE of my favorite resorts is the balcony of the central window of the Hall of Ambassadors, in the lofty tower of Comares. I have just been seated there, enjoying the close of a long brilliant day. The sun, as he sank behind the purple mountains of Alhama, sent a stream of effulgence up the valley of the Darro that spread a melancholy pomp over the ruddy towers of the Alhambra, while the Vega, covered with a slight sultry vapor that caught the setting ray, seemed spread out in the distance like a golden sea. Not a breath of air disturbed the stillness of the hour, and though the faint sound of music and merriment now and then arose from the gardens of the Darro, it but rendered more impressive the monumental silence of the pile which overshadowed me. It was one of those hours and scenes in which memory asserts an almost magical power, and, like the evening sun beaming on these mouldering towers, sends back her retrospective rays to light up the glories of the past.

As I sat watching the effect of the declining daylight upon this Moorish pile, I was led into a consideration of the light, elegant and voluptuous character prevalent throughout its internal architecture, and to contrast it with the grand but gloomy solemnity of the Gothic edifices reared by the Spanish conquerors. The very architecture thus bespeaks the opposite and irreconcilable natures of the two warlike people who so long battled here for the mastery of the Peninsula. By degrees I fell into a course of musing upon the singular features of the Arabian or Morisco Spaniards, whose

whole existence is as a tale that is told, and certainly forms one of the most anomalous yet splendid episodes in history. Potent and durable as was their dominion, we have no one distinct title by which to designate them. They were a nation, as it were, without a legitimate country or a name. A remote wave of the great Arabian inundation, cast upon the shores of Europe, they seemed to have all the impetus of the first rush of the torrent. Their course of conquest from the rock of Gibraltar to the cliffs of the Pyrenees, was as rapid and brilliant as the Moslem victories of Syria and Egypt. Nay, had they not been checked on the plains of Tours, all France, all Europe, might have been overrun with the same facility as the empires of the east, and the crescent might at this day have glittered on the fanes of Paris and of London.

Repelled within the limits of the Pyrenees, the mixed hordes of Asia and Africa that formed this great irruption gave up the Moslem principles of conquest, and sought to establish in Spain a peaceful and permanent dominion. As conquerors their heroism was only equaled by their moderation; and in both, for a time, they excelled the nations with whom they contended. Severed from their native homes, they loved the land given them, as they supposed, by Allah, and strove to embellish it with everything that could administer to the happiness of man. Laying the foundations of their power in a system of wise and equitable laws, diligently cultivating the arts and sciences, and promoting agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, they gradually formed an empire unrivaled for its prosperity by any of the empires of Christendom; and diligently drawing round them the graces and refinements that marked the Arabian empire in the east at the time of its greatest civilization, they diffused the light of Oriental knowledge through the western regions of benighted Europe.

The cities of Arabian Spain became the resort of Christian artisans, to instruct themselves in the useful arts. The universities of Toledo, Cordova, Seville and Granada were

sought by the pale student from other lands, to acquaint himself with the sciences of the Arabs, and the treasured lore of antiquity; the lovers of the gay sciences resorted to Cordova and Granada, to imbibe the poetry and music of the east; and the steel-clad warriors of the north hastened thither, to accomplish themselves in the graceful exercises and courteous usages of chivalry. If the Moslem monuments in Spain; if the Mosque of Cordova, the Alcazar of Seville and the Alhambra of Granada, still bear inscriptions fondly boasting of the power and permanency of their dominion, can the boast be derided as arrogant and vain? Generation after generation, century after century had passed away, and still they maintained possession of the land. A period had elapsed longer than that which has passed since England was subjugated by the Norman conqueror; and the descendants of Musa and Tarik might as little anticipate being driven into exile, across the same straits traversed by their triumphant ancestors, as the descendants of Rollo and William and their victorious peers may dream of being driven back to the shores of Normandy.

With all this, however, the Moslem empire in Spain was but a brilliant exotic that took no permanent root in the soil it embellished. Secured from all their neighbors of the west by impassable barriers of faith and manners, and separated by seas and deserts from their kindred of the east, they were an isolated people. Their whole existence was a prolonged though gallant and chivalric struggle for a foothold in a usurped land. They were the outposts and frontiers of Islamism. The Peninsula was the great battle ground where the Gothic conquerors of the north and the Moslem conquerors of the east met and strove for mastery; and the fiery courage of the Arab was at length subdued by the obstinate and persevering valor of the Goth.

Never was the annihilation of a people more complete than that of the Morisco Spaniards. Where are they? Ask the shores of Barbary and its desert places. The exiled remnant of their once powerful empire disappeared among

the barbarians of Africa, and ceased to be a nation. They have not even left a distinct name behind them, though for nearly eight centuries they were a distinct people. The home of their adoption and of their occupation for ages refuses to acknowledge them but as invaders and usurpers. A few broken monuments are all that remain to bear witness to their power and dominion, as solitary rocks left far in the interior bear testimony to the extent of some vast inundation. Such is the Alhambra. A Moslem pile in the midst of a Christian land; an Oriental palace amid the Gothic edifices of the west; an elegant memento of a brave, intelligent and graceful people, who conquered, ruled, and passed away.

THE HOUSEHOLD

It is time that I give some idea of my domestic arrangements in this singular residence. The royal palace of the Alhambra is intrusted to the care of a good old maiden dame called Doña Antonia Molina, but who, according to Spanish custom, goes by the more neighborly appellation of Tia Antonia (Aunt Antonia). She maintains the Moorish halls and gardens in order, and shows them to strangers; in consideration of which, she is allowed all the perquisites received from visitors and all the produce of the gardens, excepting that she is expected to pay an occasional tribute of fruits and flowers to the governor. Her residence is in a corner of the palace, and her family consists of a nephew and niece, the children of two different brothers. The nephew, Manuel Molina, is a young man of sterling worth and Spanish gravity. He has served in the armies both in Spain and the West Indies, but is now studying medicine in hopes of one day or other becoming physician to the fortress, a post worth at least a hundred and forty dollars a year. As to the niece, she is a plump little black-eyed Andalusian damsel

named Dolores, but who from her bright looks and cheerful disposition merits a merrier name. She is the declared heiress of all her aunt's possessions, consisting of certain ruinous tenements in the fortress, yielding a revenue of about one hundred and fifty dollars. I had not been long in the Alhambra before I discovered that a quiet courtship was going on between the discreet Manuel and his bright-eyed cousin, and that nothing was wanting to enable them to join their hands and expectations, but that he should receive his doctor's diploma, and purchase a dispensation from the Pope, on account of their consanguinity.

With the good dame Antonia I have made a treaty, according to which, she furnishes me with board and lodging, while the merry-hearted little Dolores keeps my apartment in order and officiates as handmaid at meal times. I have also at my command a tall, stuttering, yellow-haired lad named Pepe, who works in the garden, and would fain have acted as valet, but in this he was forestalled by Mateo Ximenes, "The son of the Alhambra." This alert and officious wight has managed, somehow or other, to stick by me, ever since I first encountered him at the outer gate of the fortress, and to weave himself into all my plans, until he has fairly appointed and installed himself my valet, cicerone, guide, guard, and historio-graphic squire; and I have been obliged to improve the state of his wardrobe, that he may not disgrace his various functions, so that he has cast off his old brown mantle, as a snake does his skin, and now figures about the fortress with a smart Andalusian hat and jacket, to his infinite satisfaction and the great astonishment of his comrades. The chief fault of honest Mateo is an over-anxiety to be useful. Conscious of having foisted himself into my employ, and that my simple and quiet habits render his situation a sinecure, he is at his wit's end to devise modes of making himself important to my welfare. I am in a manner the victim of his officiousness; I cannot put my foot over the threshold of the palace to stroll about the fortress, but he is at my elbow to explain everything I see, and if I venture to

ramble among the surrounding hills, he insists upon attending me as a guard, though I vehemently suspect he would be more apt to trust to the length of his legs than the strength of his arms in case of attack. After all, however, the poor fellow is at times an amusing companion; he is simple-minded and of infinite good-humor, with the loquacity and gossip of a village barber, and knows all the small talk of the place and its environs; but what he chiefly values himself on is his stock of local information, having the most marvelous stories to relate of every tower and vault and gateway of the fortress, in all of which he places the most implicit faith.

Most of these he has derived, according to his own account, from his grandfather, a little legendary tailor, who lived to the age of nearly a hundred years, during which he made but two migrations beyond the precincts of the fortress. His shop, for the greater part of a century, was the resort of a knot of venerable gossips, where they would pass half the night talking about old times and the wonderful events and hidden secrets of the place. The whole living, moving, thinking and acting of this little historical tailor had thus been bounded by the walls of the Alhambra; within them he had been born, within them he lived, breathed and had his being, within them he had died and was buried. Fortunately for posterity his traditionary lore died not with him. The authentic Mateo, when an urchin, used to be an attentive listener to the narratives of his grandfather and of the gossip group assembled round the shop board, and is thus possessed of a stock of valuable knowledge concerning the Alhambra, not to be found in the books, and well worthy the attention of every curious traveler.

Such are the personages that contribute to my domestic comforts in the Alhambra, and I question whether any of the potentates, Moslem or Christian, who have preceded me in the palace have been waited upon with greater fidelity or enjoyed a serener sway.

When I rise in the morning, Pepe, the stuttering lad,

from the gardens, brings me a tribute of fresh culled flowers, which are afterward arranged in vases by the skillful hand of Dolores, who takes no small pride in the decorations of my chamber. My meals are made wherever caprice dictates, sometimes in one of the Moorish halls, sometimes under the arcades of the Court of Lions, surrounded by flowers and fountains; and when I walk out I am conducted by the assiduous Mateo to the most romantic retreats of the mountains and delicious haunts of the adjacent valleys, not one of which but is the scene of some wonderful tale.

Though fond of passing the greater part of my day alone, yet I occasionally repair in the evenings to the little domestic circle of Doña Antonia. This is generally held in an old Moorish chamber, that serves for kitchen as well as hall, a rude fire-place having been made in one corner, the smoke from which has discolored the walls and almost obliterated the ancient arabesques. A window with a balcony overhanging the Alameda of the Darro lets in the cool evening breeze, and here I take my frugal supper of fruit and milk, and mingle with the conversation of the family. There is a natural talent, or mother wit, as it is called, about the Spaniards, which renders them intellectual and agreeable companions, whatever may be their condition in life, or however imperfect may have been their education; add to this, they are never vulgar; nature has endowed them with an inherent dignity of spirit. The good Tia Antonia is a woman of strong and intelligent, though uncultivated mind, and the bright-eyed Dolores, though she has read but three or four books in the whole course of her life, has an engaging mixture of naivete and good sense, and often surprises me by the pungency of her artless sallies. Sometimes the nephew entertains us by reading some old comedy of Calderon or Lope de Vega, to which he is evidently prompted by a desire to improve, as well as amuse his cousin Dolores, though to his great mortification the little damsel generally falls asleep before the first act is completed. Sometimes Tia Antonia has a little bevy of humble friends and dependents, the in-

habitants of the adjacent hamlet, or the wives of the invalid soldiers. These look up to her with great deference as the custodian of the palace, and pay their court to her by bringing the news of the place, or the rumors that may have straggled up from Granada. In listening to the evening gossipings, I have picked up many curious facts, illustrative of the manners of the people and the peculiarities of the neighborhood.

These are simple details of simple pleasures; it is the nature of the place alone that gives them interest and importance. I tread haunted ground and am surrounded by romantic associations. From earliest boyhood, when, on the banks of the Hudson, I first pored over the pages of an old Spanish story about the wars of Granada, that city has ever been a subject of my waking dreams, and often have I trod in fancy the romantic halls of the Alhambra. Behold for once a day-dream realized; yet I can scarcely credit my senses or believe that I do indeed inhabit the palace of Boabdil, and look down from its balconies upon chivalric Granada. As I loiter through the Oriental chambers, and hear the murmuring of fountains and the song of the nightingale; as I inhale the odor of the rose, and feel the influence of the balmy climate; I am almost tempted to fancy myself in the Paradise of Mahomet, and that the plump little Dolores is one of the bright-eyed Houris, destined to administer to the happiness of true believers.

THE TRUANT

SINCE writing the foregoing pages we have had a scene of petty tribulation in the Alhambra which has thrown a cloud over the sunny countenance of Dolores. This little damsel has a female passion for pets of all kinds, from the superabundant kindness of her disposition. One of the ruined courts of the Alhambra is thronged with her favor-

ites. A stately peacock and his hen seem to hold regal sway here, over pompous turkeys, querulous guinea fowls, and a rabble rout of common cocks and hens. The great delight of Dolores, however, has for some time past been centered in a youthful pair of pigeons, who have lately entered into the holy state of wedlock, and who have even supplanted a tortoise-shell cat and kitten in her affections.

As a tenement for them to commence housekeeping she had fitted up a small chamber adjacent to the kitchen, the window of which looked into one of the quiet Moorish courts. Here they lived in happy ignorance of any world beyond the court and its sunny roofs. In vain they aspired to soar above the battlements, or to mount to the summit of the towers. Their virtuous union was at length crowned by two spotless and milk-white eggs, to the great joy of their cherishing little mistress. Nothing could be more praiseworthy than the conduct of the young married folks on this interesting occasion. They took turns to sit upon the nest until the eggs were hatched, and while their callow progeny required warmth and shelter. While one thus stayed at home, the other foraged abroad for food, and brought home abundant supplies.

This scene of conjugal felicity has suddenly met with a reverse. Early this morning, as Dolores was feeding the male pigeon, she took a fancy to give him a peep at the great world. Opening a window, therefore, which looks down upon the valley of the Darro, she launched him at once beyond the walls of the Alhambra. For the first time in his life the astonished bird had to try the full vigor of his wings. He swept down into the valley, and then rising upward with a surge, soared almost to the clouds. Never before had he risen to such a height or experienced such delight in flying, and, like a young spendthrift just come to his estate, he seemed giddy with excess of liberty and with the boundless field of action suddenly opened to him. For the whole day he has been circling about in capricious flights, from tower to tower and from tree to tree. Every attempt has

been made in vain to lure him back, by scattering grain upon the roofs; he seems to have lost all thought of home, of his tender helpmate and his callow young. To add to the anxiety of Dolores, he has been joined by two palomas ladrones, or robber pigeons, whose instinct it is to entice wandering pigeons to their own dove-cotes. The fugitive, like many other thoughtless youths on their first launching upon the world, seems quite fascinated with these knowing, but graceless, companions, who have undertaken to show him life and introduce him to society. He has been soaring with them over all the roofs and steeples of Granada. A thunder shower has passed over the city, but he has not sought his home; night has closed in, and still he comes not. To deepen the pathos of the affair, the female pigeon, after remaining several hours on the nest without being relieved, at length went forth to seek her recreant mate; but stayed away so long that the young ones perished for want of the warmth and shelter of the parent bosom.

At a late hour in the evening word was brought to Dolores that the truant bird had been seen upon the towers of the Generaliffe. Now, it so happens that the administrador of that ancient palace has likewise a dove-cote, among the inmates of which are said to be two or three of these inveigling birds, the terror of all neighboring pigeon fanciers. Dolores immediately concluded that the two feathered sharpers who had been seen with her fugitive were these bloods of the Generaliffe. A council of war was forthwith held in the chamber of Tia Antonia. The Generaliffe is a distinct jurisdiction from the Alhambra, and of course some punctilio, if not jealousy, exists between their custodians. It was determined, therefore, to send Pepe, the stuttering lad of the gardens, as ambassador to the administrador, requesting that if such a fugitive should be found in his dominion she might be given up as a subject of the Alhambra. Pepe departed, accordingly, on his diplomatic expedition, through the moonlit groves and avenues, but returned in an hour with the afflicting intelligence that no such bird was to be

found in the dove-cote of the Generaliffe. The administrator, however, pledged his sovereign bird, that if such vagrant should appear there, even at midnight, he should instantly be arrested and sent back prisoner to his little black-eyed mistress.

Thus stands this melancholy affair, which has occasioned much distress throughout the palace, and has sent the inconsolable Dolores to a sleepless pillow.

“Sorrow endureth for a night,” says the proverb, “but joy ariseth in the morning.” The first object that met my eyes on leaving my room this morning was Dolores with the truant pigeon in her hand, and her eyes sparkling with joy. He had appeared at an early hour on the battlements, hovering shyly about from roof to roof, but at length entered the window and surrendered himself prisoner. He gained little credit, however, by his return, for the ravenous manner in which he devoured the food set before him showed that, like the prodigal son, he had been driven home by sheer famine. Dolores upbraided him for his faithless conduct, calling him all manner of vagrant names, though, woman-like, she fondled him at the same time to her bosom and covered him with kisses. I observed, however, that she had taken care to clip his wings to prevent all future soarings; a precaution which I mention for the benefit of all those who have truant wives or wandering husbands. More than one valuable moral might be drawn from the story of Dolores and her pigeon.

THE AUTHOR'S CHAMBER

ON taking up my abode in the Alhambra, one end of a suite of empty chambers of modern architecture, intended for the residence of the governor, was fitted up for my reception. It was in front of the palace, looking forth upon the esplanade. The further end communicated with a cluster of

little chambers, partly Moorish, partly modern, inhabited by Tia Antonia and her family. These terminated in a large room which serves the good old dame for parlor, kitchen, and hall of audience. It had boasted of some splendor in the time of the Moors, but a fireplace had been built in one corner, the smoke from which had discolored the walls, nearly obliterated the ornaments, and spread a somber tint over the whole. From these gloomy apartments, a narrow blind corridor and a dark winding staircase led down an angle of the tower of Comares; groping down which, and opening a small door at the bottom, you are suddenly dazzled by emerging into the brilliant ante-chamber of the Hall of Ambassadors, with the fountain of the Court of the Alberca sparkling before you.

I was dissatisfied with being lodged in a modern and frontier apartment of the palace, and longed to ensconce myself in the very heart of the building.

As I was rambling one day about the Moorish halls, I found, in a remote gallery, a door which I had not before noticed, communicating apparently with an extensive apartment, locked up from the public. Here then was a mystery. Here was the haunted wing of the castle. I procured the key, however, without difficulty. The door opened to a range of vacant chambers of European architecture; though built over a Moorish arcade, along the little garden of Lindaraxa. There were two lofty rooms, the ceilings of which were of deep panel-work of cedar, richly and skillfully carved with fruits and flowers, intermingled with grotesque masks or faces; but broken in many places. The walls had evidently, in ancient times, been hung with damask, but were now naked, and scrawled over with the insignificant names of aspiring travelers; the windows, which were dismantled and open to wind and weather, looked into the garden of Lindaraxa, and the orange and citron trees flung their branches into the chambers. Beyond these rooms were two saloons, less lofty, looking also into the garden. In the compartments of the paneled ceiling were baskets of



fruit and garlands of flowers, painted by no mean hand, and in tolerable preservation. The walls had also been painted in fresco in the Italian style, but the paintings were nearly obliterated. The windows were in the same shattered state as in the other chambers.

This fanciful suite of rooms terminated in an open gallery with balustrades, which ran at right angles along another side of the garden. The whole apartment had a delicacy and elegance in its decorations, and there was something so choice and sequestered in its situation, along this retired little garden, that awakened an interest in its history. I found, on inquiry, that it was an apartment fitted up by Italian artists, in the early part of the last century, at the time when Philip V. and the beautiful Elizabetta of Parma were expected at the Alhambra; and was destined for the queen and the ladies of her train. One of the loftiest chambers had been her sleeping room, and a narrow staircase leading from it, though now walled up, opened to the delightful belvedere, originally a mirador of the Moorish sultanas, but fitted up as a boudoir for the fair Elizabetta, and which still retains the name of the Tocador, or toilet of the queen. The sleeping room I have mentioned commanded from one window a prospect of the Generaliffe and its imbowered terraces; under another window played the alabaster fountain of the garden of Lindaraxa. That garden carried my thoughts still further back, to the period of another reign of beauty; to the days of the Moorish sultanas. "How beauteous is this garden!" says an Arabic inscription, "where the flowers of the earth vie with the stars of heaven! what can compare with the vase of yon alabaster fountain filled with crystal water? Nothing but the moon in her fullness, shining in the midst of an unclouded sky!"

Centuries had elapsed, yet how much of this scene of apparently fragile beauty remained! The garden of Lindaraxa was still adorned with flowers; the fountain still presented its crystal mirror: it is true, the alabaster had lost its whiteness, and the basin beneath, overrun with weeds, had

10759

become the nestling place of the lizard; but there was something in the very decay that enhanced the interest of the scene, speaking, as it did, of that mutability which is the irrevocable lot of man and all his works. The desolation, too, of these chambers, once the abode of the proud and elegant Elizabetta, had a more touching charm for me than if I had beheld them in their pristine splendor, glittering with the pageantry of a court.—I determined at once to take up my quarters in this apartment.

My determination excited great surprise in the family; who could not imagine any rational inducement for the choice of so solitary, remote and forlorn an apartment. The good Tia Antonia considered it highly dangerous. The neighborhood, she said, was infested by vagrants; the caverns of the adjacent hills swarmed with gypsies; the palace was ruinous and easy to be entered in many parts; and the rumor of a stranger quartered alone in one of the ruined apartments, out of the hearing of the rest of the inhabitants, might tempt unwelcome visitors in the night, especially as foreigners are always supposed to be well stocked with money. Dolores represented the frightful loneliness of the place; nothing but bats and owls flitting about; then there were a fox and a wild cat that kept about the vaults and roamed about at night.

I was not to be diverted from my humor, so calling in the assistance of a carpenter, and the ever officious Mateo Ximenes, the doors and windows were soon placed in a state of tolerable security.

With all these precautions, I must confess the first night I passed in these quarters was inexpressibly dreary. I was escorted by the whole family to my chamber, and there taking leave of me, and retiring along the waste ante-chamber and echoing galleries, reminded me of those hobgoblin stories, where the hero is left to accomplish the adventure of a haunted house.

Soon the thoughts of the fair Elizabetta and the beauties of her court, who had once graced these chambers, now by a

perversion of fancy added to the gloom. Here was the scene of their transient gayety and loveliness; here were the very traces of their elegance and enjoyment; but what and where were they?—Dust and ashes! tenants of the tomb! phantoms of the memory!

A vague and indescribable awe was creeping over me. I would fain have ascribed it to the thoughts of robbers, awakened by the evening's conversation, but I felt that it was something more unusual and absurd. In a word, the long buried impressions of the nursery were reviving and asserting their power over my imagination. Everything began to be affected by the workings of my mind. The whispering of the wind among the citron trees beneath my window had something sinister. I cast my eyes into the garden of Lindaraxa; the groves presented a gulf of shadows; the thickets had indistinct and ghastly shapes. I was glad to close the window; but my chamber itself became infected. A bat had found its way in, and flitted about my head and athwart my solitary lamp; the grotesque faces carved in the cedar ceiling seemed to mope and mow at me.

Rousing myself, and half smiling at this temporary weakness, I resolved to brave it, and, taking lamp in hand, sallied forth to make a tour of the ancient palace. Notwithstanding every mental exertion, the task was a severe one. The rays of my lamp extended to but a limited distance around me; I walked, as it were, in a mere halo of light, and all beyond was thick darkness. The vaulted corridors were as caverns; the vaults of the halls were lost in gloom; what unseen foe might not be lurking before or behind me; my own shadow playing about the walls, and the echoes of my own footsteps, disturbed me.

In this excited state, as I was traversing the great Hall of Ambassadors, there were added real sounds to these conjectural fancies. Low moans and indistinct ejaculations seemed to rise as it were from beneath my feet; I paused and listened. They then appeared to resound from without the tower. Sometimes they resembled the howlings of an

animal, at others they were stifled shrieks, mingled with articulate ravings. The thrilling effect of these sounds in that still hour and singular place destroyed all inclination to continue my lonely perambulation. I returned to my chamber with more alacrity than I had sallied forth, and drew my breath more freely when once more within its walls and the door bolted behind me.

When I awoke in the morning, with the sun shining in at my window, and lighting up every part of the building with its cheerful and truth-telling beams, I could scarcely recall the shadows and fancies conjured up by the gloom of the preceding night; or believe that the scenes around me, so naked and apparent, could have been clothed with such imaginary horrors.

Still the dismal howlings and ejaculations I had heard were not ideal; but they were soon accounted for, by my handmaid Dolores; being the ravings of a poor maniac, a brother of her aunt, who was subject to violent paroxysms, during which he was confined in a vaulted room beneath the Hall of Ambassadors.

THE ALHAMBRA BY MOONLIGHT

I HAVE given a picture of my apartment on my first taking possession of it; a few evenings have produced a thorough change in the scene and in my feelings. The moon, which then was invisible, has gradually gained upon the nights, and now rolls in full splendor above the towers, pouring a flood of tempered light into every court and hall. The garden beneath my window is gently lighted up; the orange and citron trees are tipped with silver; the fountain sparkles in the moonbeams, and even the blush of the rose is faintly visible.

I have sat for hours at my window inhaling the sweet-

ness of the garden, and musing on the checkered features of those whose history is dimly shadowed out in the elegant memorials around. Sometimes I have issued forth at midnight when everything was quiet, and have wandered over the whole building. Who can do justice to a moonlight night in such a climate, and in such a place! The temperature of an Andalusian midnight, in summer, is perfectly ethereal. We seem lifted up into a purer atmosphere; there is a serenity of soul, a buoyancy of spirits, an elasticity of frame that render mere existence enjoyment. The effect of moonlight, too, on the Alhambra has something like enchantment. Every rent and chasm of time, every mouldering tint and weather stain disappears; the marble resumes its original whiteness; the long colonnades brighten in the moonbeams; the halls are illuminated with a softened radiance, until the whole edifice reminds one of the enchanted palace of an Arabian tale.

At such time I have ascended to the little pavilion, called the Queen's Toilet, to enjoy its varied and extensive prospect. To the right, the snowy summits of the Sierra Nevada would gleam like silver clouds against the darker firmament, and all the outlines of the mountain would be softened, yet delicately defined. My delight, however, would be to lean over the parapet of the *tocador*, and gaze down upon Granada, spread out like a map below me: all buried in deep repose, and its white palaces and convents sleeping, as it were, in the moonshine.

Sometimes I would hear the faint sounds of castanets from some party of dancers lingering in the Alameda; at other times I have heard the dubious tones of a guitar, and the notes of a single voice rising from some solitary street, and have pictured to myself some youthful cavalier serenading his lady's window; a gallant custom of former days, but now sadly on the decline except in the remote towns and villages of Spain.

Such are the scenes that have detained me for many an hour loitering about the courts and balconies of the castle,

enjoying that mixture of reverie and sensation which steal away existence in a southern climate—and it has been almost morning before I have retired to my bed, and been lulled to sleep by the falling waters of the fountain of Lindaraxa.

INHABITANTS OF THE ALHAMBRA

I HAVE often observed that the more proudly a mansion has been tenanted in the day of its prosperity, the humbler are its inhabitants in the day of its decline, and that the palace of the king commonly ends in being the nestling-place of the beggar.

The Alhambra is in a rapid state of similar transition: whenever a tower falls to decay, it is seized upon by some tatterdemalion family, who become joint tenants with the bats and owls of its gilded halls, and hang their rags, those standards of poverty, out of its windows and loopholes.

I have amused myself with remarking some of the motley characters that have thus usurped the ancient abode of royalty, and who seem as if placed here to give a farcical termination to the drama of human pride. One of these even bears the mockery of a royal title. It is a little old woman named Maria Antonia Sabonea, but who goes by the appellation of la Reyna Cuquina, or the cockle queen. She is small enough to be a fairy, and a fairy she may be for aught I can find out, for no one seems to know her origin. Her habitation is a kind of closet under the outer staircase of the palace, and she sits in the cool stone corridor plying her needle and singing from morning till night with a ready joke for every one that passes, for though one of the poorest, she is one of the merriest little women breathing. Her great merit is a gift for story-telling; having, I verily believe, as many stories at her command as the inexhaustible Scheherezade of the thousand and one nights. Some of these I have

heard her relate in the evening tertulias of Doña Antonia, at which she is occasionally a humble attendant.

That there must be some fairy gift about this mysterious little old woman would appear from her extraordinary luck, since, notwithstanding her being very little, very ugly, and very poor, she has had, according to her own account, five husbands and a half; reckoning as a half, one, a young dragoon, who died during courtship.

A rival personage to this little fairy queen is a portly old fellow with a bottle nose, who goes about in a rusty garb, with a cocked hat of oil skin and a red cockade. He is one of the legitimate sons of the Alhambra, and has lived here all his life, filling various offices; such as deputy alguazil, sexton of the parochial church, and marker of a five's court established at the foot of one of the towers. He is as poor as a rat, but as proud as he is ragged, boasting of his descent from the illustrious house of Aguilar, from which sprang Gonsalvo of Cordova, the Grand captain. Nay, he actually bears the name of Alonzo de Aguilar, so renowned in the history of the conquest, though the graceless wags of the fortress have given him the title of el Padre Santo, or the Holy Father, the usual appellation of the Pope, which I had thought too sacred in the eyes of true Catholics to be thus ludicrously applied. It is a whimsical caprice of fortune, to present in the grotesque person of this tatterdemalion a namesake and descendant of the proud Alonzo de Aguilar, the mirror of Andalusian chivalry, leading an almost mendicant existence about this once haughty fortress, which his ancestor aided to reduce; yet such might have been the lot of the descendants of Agamemnon and Achilles, had they lingered about the ruins of Troy.

Of this motley community I find the family of my gossiping squire Mateo Ximenes to form, from their numbers at least, a very important part. His boast of being a son of the Alhambra is not unfounded. This family has inhabited the fortress ever since the time of the conquest, handing down a hereditary poverty from father to son, not one of them hav-

ing ever been known to be worth a marevedi. His father, by trade a ribbon weaver, and who succeeded the historical tailor as the head of the family, is now near seventy years of age, and lives in a hovel of reeds and plaster, built by his own hands, just above the iron gate. The furniture consists of a crazy bed, a table, and two or three chairs; a wooden chest, containing his clothes and the archives of his family; that is to say, a few papers concerning old lawsuits which he cannot read; but the pride of his heart is a blazon of the arms of the family, brilliantly colored and suspended in a frame against the wall, clearly demonstrating by its quarterings the various noble houses with which this poverty-stricken brood claim affinity.

As to Mateo himself, he has done his utmost to perpetuate his line; having a wife and a numerous progeny who inhabit an almost dismantled hovel in the hamlet. How they manage to subsist, He only who sees into all mysteries can tell—the subsistence of a Spanish family of the kind is always a riddle to me; yet they do subsist, and, what is more, appear to enjoy their existence. The wife takes her holyday stroll in the Paseo of Granada, with a child in her arms and half a dozen at her heels, and the eldest daughter, now verging into womanhood, dresses her hair with flowers and dances gayly to the castanets.

There are two classes of people to whom life seems one long holyday, the very rich and the very poor; one because they need do nothing, the other because they have nothing to do; but there are none who understand the art of doing nothing and living upon nothing better than the poor classes of Spain. Climate does one half and temperament the rest. Give a Spaniard the shade in summer and the sun in winter, a little bread, garlic, oil and garbanzos, an old brown cloak and a guitar, and let the world roll on as it pleases. Talk of poverty, with him it has no disgrace. It sits upon him with a grandioso style, like his ragged coat. He is a hidalgo even when in rags.

The “Sons of the Alhambra” are an eminent illustration

of this practical philosophy. As the Moors imagined that the celestial paradise hung over this favored spot, so I am inclined, at times, to fancy that a gleam of the golden age still lingers about this ragged community. They possess nothing, they do nothing, they care for nothing. Yet, though apparently idle all the week, they are as observant of all holydays and saints' days as the most laborious artisan. They attend all fetes and dancings in Granada and its vicinity, light bonfires on the hills of St. John's eve, and have lately danced away the moonlight nights, on the harvest home of a small field of wheat within the precincts of the fortress.

Before concluding these remarks I must mention one of the amusements of the place which has particularly struck me. I had repeatedly observed a long, lean fellow perched on the top of one of the towers maneuvering two or three fishing rods, as though he was angling for the stars. I was for some time perplexed by the evolutions of this aerial fisherman, and my perplexity increased on observing others employed in like manner on different parts of the battlements and bastions; it was not until I consulted Mateo Ximenes that I solved the mystery.

It seems that the pure and airy situation of this fortress has rendered it, like the castle of Macbeth, a prolific breeding-place for swallows and martlets, who sport about its towers in myriads, with the holyday glee of urchins just let loose from school. To entrap these birds in their giddy circlings, with hooks baited with flies, is one of the favorite amusements of the ragged "Sons of the Alhambra," who, with the good-for-nothing ingenuity of arrant idlers, have thus invented the art of angling in the sky.

THE BALCONY

IN the Hall of Ambassadors, at the central window, there is a balcony of which I have already made mention. It projects like a cage from the face of the tower, high in mid-air, above the tops of the trees that grow on the steep hill-side. It answers me as a kind of observatory, where I often take my seat to consider, not merely the heavens above, but the "earth beneath." Beside the magnificent prospect which it commands, of mountain, valley and Vega, there is a busy little scene of human life laid open to inspection immediately below. At the foot of the hill is an alameda or public walk, which, though not so fashionable as the more modern and splendid paseo of the Xenil, still boasts a varied and picturesque concourse, especially on holydays and Sundays. Hither resort the small gentry of the suburbs, together with priests and friars who walk for appetite and digestion; majos and majas, the beaux and belles of the lower classes in their Andalusian dresses; swaggering contrabandistas, and sometimes half-muffled and mysterious loungers of the higher ranks on some silent assignation.

It is a moving picture of Spanish life which I delight to study; and as the naturalist has his microscope to assist him in his curious investigations, so I have a small pocket telescope which brings the countenances of the motley groups so close as almost at times to make me think I can divine their conversation by the play and expression of their features. I am thus, in a manner, an invisible observer, and without quitting my solitude can throw myself in an instant into the midst of society—a rare advantage to one of somewhat shy and quiet habits.

Then there is a considerable suburb lying below the Alhambra, filling the narrow gorge of the valley and extending



THE ADVENTURE OF THE MASON.

Irving, Vol. Two, p. 66.

up the opposite hill of the Albaycin. Many of the houses are built in the Moorish style, round patios or courts cooled by fountains and open to the sky; and as the inhabitants pass much of their time in these courts and on the terraced roofs during the summer season, it follows that many a glance at their domestic life may be obtained by an aerial spectator like myself, who can look down on them from the clouds.

I enjoy, in some degree, the advantages of the student in the famous old Spanish story, who beheld all Madrid unroofed for his inspection; and my gossiping squire Mateo Ximenes officiates occasionally as my Asmodeus, to give me anecdotes of the different mansions and their inhabitants.

I prefer, however, to form conjectural histories for myself; and thus can sit up aloft for hours, weaving from casual incidents and indications that pass under my eye the whole tissue of schemes, intrigues and occupations, carrying on by certain of the busy mortals below us. There is scarce a pretty face or striking figure that I daily see, about which I have not thus gradually framed a dramatic story; though some of my characters will occasionally act in direct opposition to the part assigned them and disconcert my whole drama.

A few days since as I was reconnoitering with my glass the streets of the Albaycin, I beheld the procession of a novice about to take the veil; and remarked various circumstances that excited the strongest sympathy in the fate of the youthful being thus about to be consigned to a living tomb. I ascertained, to my satisfaction, that she was beautiful; and, by the paleness of her cheek, that she was a victim, rather than a votary. She was arrayed in bridal garments and decked with a chaplet of white flowers; but her heart evidently revolted at this mockery of a spiritual union, and yearned after its earthly loves. A tall stern-looking man walked near her in the procession; it was evidently the tyrannical father, who, from some bigoted or sordid motive, had compelled this sacrifice. Amid the crowd was a dark, handsome youth, in Andalusian garb, who seemed to fix on

her an eye of agony. It was doubtless the secret lover from whom she was forever to be separated. My indignation rose as I noted the malignant exultation painted in the countenances of the attendant monks and friars. The procession arrived at the chapel of the convent; the sun gleamed for the last time upon the chaplet of the poor novice as she crossed the fatal threshold and disappeared from sight. The throng poured in with cowl and cross and minstrelsy. The lover paused for a moment at the door; I could understand the tumult of his feelings, but he mastered them and entered. There was a long interval—I pictured to myself the scene passing within.—The poor novice despoiled of her transient finery—clothed in the conventual garb; the bridal chaplet taken from her brow; her beautiful head shorn of its long silken tresses—I heard her murmur the irrevocable vow—I saw her extended on her bier; the death pall spread over; the funeral service performed that proclaimed her dead to the world; her sighs were drowned in the wailing anthem of the nuns and the sepulchral tones of the organ—the father looked, unmoved, without a tear—the lover—no—my fancy refused to portray the anguish of the lover—there the picture remained a blank.—The ceremony was over: the crowd again issued forth to behold the day and mingle in the joyous stir of life—but the victim with her bridal chaplet was no longer there—the door of the convent closed that secured her from the world forever. I saw the father and the lover issue forth—they were in earnest conversation—the young man was violent in his gestures, when the wall of a house intervened and shut them from my sight.

That evening I noticed a solitary light twinkling from a remote lattice of the convent. There, said I, the unhappy novice sits weeping in her cell, while her lover paces the street below in unavailing anguish.

—The officious Mateo interrupted my meditations and destroyed, in an instant, the cobweb tissue of my fancy. With his usual zeal he had gathered facts concerning the scene that had interested me. The heroine of my romance was

neither young nor handsome—she had no love—she had entered the convent of her own free will, as a respectable asylum, and was one of the cheerfulest residents within its walls!

I felt at first half vexed with the nun for being thus happy in her cell, in contradiction to all the rules of romance; but diverted my spleen by watching, for a day or two, the pretty coquetries of a dark-eyed brunette, who, from the covert of a balcony shrouded with flowering shrubs and a silken awning, was carrying on a mysterious correspondence with a handsome, dark, well-whiskered cavalier in the street beneath her window. Sometimes I saw him, at an early hour, stealing forth wrapped to the eyes in a mantle. Sometimes he loitered at the corner, in various disguises, apparently waiting for a private signal to slip into the bower. Then there was a tinkling of a guitar at night, and a lantern shifted from place to place in the balcony. I imagined another romantic intrigue like that of *Almaviva*, but was again disconcerted in all my suppositions by being informed that the supposed lover was the husband of the lady and a noted contrabandista, and that all his mysterious signs and movements had doubtless some smuggling scheme in view.

Scarce had the gray dawn streaked the sky and the earliest cock crowed from the cottages of the hillside, when the suburbs gave sign of reviving animation; for the fresh hours of dawning are precious in the summer season in a sultry climate. All are anxious to get the start of the sun in the business of the day. The muleteer drives forth his loaded train for the journey; the traveler slings his carbine behind his saddle and mounts his steed at the gate of the hostel. The brown peasant urges his loitering donkeys, laden with panniers of sunny fruit and fresh dewy vegetables; for already the thrifty housewives are hastening to the market.

The sun is up and sparkles along the valley, topping the transparent foliage of the groves. The matin bells resound melodiously through the pure bright air, announcing the hour of devotion. The muleteer halts his burdened animals

before the chapel, thrusts his staff through his belt behind, and enters with hat in hand, smoothing his coal black hair, to hear a mass and put up a prayer for a prosperous wayfarer across the sierra.

And now steals forth with fairy foot the gentle señora, in trim busquina; with restless fan in hand and dark eye flashing from beneath her gracefully folded mantilla. She seeks some well frequented church to offer up her orisons; but the nicely adjusted dress, the dainty shoe and cobweb stocking, the raven tresses scrupulously braided, the fresh plucked rose that gleams among them like a gem, show that earth divides with heaven the empire of her thoughts.

As the morning advances, the din of labor augments on every side; the streets are thronged with man and steed, and beast of burden; the universal movement produces a hum and murmur like the surges of the ocean. As the sun ascends to his meridian the hum and bustle gradually decline; at the height of noon there is a pause; the panting city sinks into lassitude, and for several hours there is a general repose. The windows are closed; the curtains drawn; the inhabitants retired into the coolest recesses of their mansions. The full-fed monk snores in his dormitory. The brawny porter lies stretched on the pavement beside his burden. The peasant and the laborer sleep beneath the trees of the Alameda, lulled by the sultry chirping of the locust. The streets are deserted except by the water carrier, who refreshes the ear by proclaiming the merits of his sparkling beverage—"Colder than mountain snow."

As the sun declines there is again a gradual reviving, and when the vesper bell rings out his sinking knell, all nature seems to rejoice that the tyrant of the day has fallen.

Now begins the bustle of enjoyment. The citizens pour forth to breathe the evening air, and revel away the brief twilight in the walks and gardens of the Darro and the Xenil.

As the night closes the motley scene assumes new features. Light after light gradually twinkles forth; here a

taper from a balconied window; there a votive lamp before the image of a saint. Thus by degrees the city emerges from the pervading gloom, and sparkles with scattered lights like the starry firmament. Now break forth from court, and garden, and street, and lane, the tinkling of innumerable guitars and the clicking of castanets, blending at this lofty height in a faint and general concert. "Enjoy the moment," is the creed of the gay and amorous Andalusian, and at no time does he practice it more zealously than in the balmy nights of summer, wooing his mistress with the dance, the love ditty and the passionate serenade.

I was seated one evening in the balcony enjoying the light breeze that came rustling along the side of the hill among the treetops, when my humble historiographer, Mateo, who was at my elbow, pointed out a spacious house in an obscure street of the Albaycin, about which he related, as nearly as I can recollect, the following anecdote:

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MASON

There was once upon a time a poor mason or bricklayer in Granada, who kept all the saints' days and holydays, and saint Monday into the bargain, and yet, with all his devotion, he grew poorer and poorer, and could scarcely earn bread for his numerous family. One night he was roused from his first sleep by a knocking at his door. He opened it and beheld before him a tall, meager, cadaverous-looking priest. "Hark ye, honest friend," said the stranger, "I have observed that you are a good Christian, and one to be trusted; will you undertake a job this very night?"

"With all my heart, Señor Padre, on condition that I am paid accordingly."

"That you shall be, but you must suffer yourself to be blindfolded."

To this the mason made no objection; so being hoodwinked, he was led by the priest through various rough

lanes and winding passages until they stopped before the portal of a house. The priest then applied a key, turned a creaking lock and opened what sounded like a ponderous door. They entered, the door was closed and bolted, and the mason was conducted, through an echoing corridor and spacious hall, to an interior part of the building. Here the bandage was removed from his eyes, and he found himself in a patio, or court, dimly lighted by a single lamp.

In the center was a dry basin of an old Moorish fountain, under which the priest requested him to form a small vault, bricks and mortar being at hand for the purpose. He accordingly worked all night, but without finishing the job. Just before daybreak the priest put a piece of gold into his hand, and having again blindfolded him, conducted him back to his dwelling.

"Are you willing," said he, "to return and complete your work?"

"Gladly, Señor Padre, provided I am as well paid."

"Well, then, to-morrow at midnight I will call again."

He did so, and the vault was completed. "Now," said the priest, "you must help me to bring forth the bodies that are to be buried in this vault."

The poor mason's hair rose on his head at these words; he followed the priest with trembling steps, into a retired chamber of the mansion, expecting to behold some ghastly spectacle of death, but was relieved, on perceiving three or four portly jars standing in one corner. They were evidently full of money, and it was with great labor that he and the priest carried them forth and consigned them to their tomb. The vault was then closed, the pavement replaced, and all traces of the work obliterated.

The mason was again hoodwinked and led forth by a route different from that by which he had come. After they had wandered for a long time through a perplexed maze of lanes and alleys they halted. The priest then put two pieces of gold into his hand. "Wait here," said he, "until you hear the cathedral bell toll for matins. If you

presume to uncover your eyes before that time evil will befall you." So saying he departed.

The mason waited faithfully, amusing himself by weighing the gold pieces in his hand and clinking them against each other. The moment the cathedral bell rung its matin peal, he uncovered his eyes and found himself on the banks of the Xenil; from whence he made the best of his way home, and reveled with his family for a whole fortnight on the profits of his two nights' work, after which he was as poor as ever.

He continued to work a little and pray a good deal, and keep holydays and saints' day from year to year, while his family grew up as gaunt and ragged as a crew of gypsies.

As he was seated one morning at the door of his hovel, he was accosted by a rich old curmudgeon who was noted for owning many houses and being a griping landlord.

The man of money eyed him for a moment from beneath a pair of shagged eyebrows.

"I am told, friend, that you are very poor."

"There is no denying the fact, señor; it speaks for itself."

"I presume, then, you will be glad of a job, and will work cheap."

"As cheap, my master, as any mason in Granada."

"That's what I want. I have an old house fallen to decay that costs me more money than it is worth to keep it in repair, for nobody will live in it; so I must contrive to patch it up and keep it together at as small expense as possible."

The mason was accordingly conducted to a huge deserted house that seemed going to ruin. Passing through several empty halls and chambers, he entered an inner court, where his eye was caught by an old Moorish fountain.

He paused for a moment. "It seems," said he, "as if I had been in this place before; but it is like a dream.—Pray who occupied this house formerly?"

"A pest upon him!" cried the landlord. "It was an old miserly priest, who cared for nobody but himself. He was said to be immensely rich, and, having no relations, it was

thought he would leave all his treasure to the church. He died suddenly, and the priests and friars thronged to take possession of his wealth, but nothing could they find but a few ducats in a leathern purse. The worst luck has fallen on me; for since his death, the old fellow continues to occupy my house without paying rent, and there's no taking the law of a dead man. The people pretend to hear the clinking of gold all night long in the chamber where the old priest slept, as if he were counting over his money, and sometimes a groaning and moaning about the court. Whether true or false these stories have brought a bad name on my house, and not a tenant will remain in it.

"Enough," said the mason sturdily—"Let me live in your house rent free until some better tenant presents, and I will engage to put it in repair and quiet the troubled spirits that disturb it. I am a good Christian and a poor man, and am not to be daunted by the devil himself, even though he come in the shape of a big bag of money."

The offer of the honest mason was gladly accepted; he moved with his family into the house, and fulfilled all his engagements. By little and little he restored it to its former state. The clinking of gold was no longer heard at night in the chamber of the defunct priest, but began to be heard by day in the pocket of the living mason. In a word, he increased rapidly in wealth, to the admiration of all his neighbors, and became one of the richest men in Granada. He gave large sums to the church, by way, no doubt, of satisfying his conscience, and never revealed the secret of the wealth until on his deathbed, to his son and heir.

A RAMBLE AMONG THE HILLS

I FREQUENTLY amuse myself toward the close of the day, when the heat has subsided, with taking long rambles about the neighboring hills and the deep umbrageous valleys, accompanied by my historiographer Squire Mateo, to whose

passion for gossiping I, on such occasions, give the most unbounded license; and there is scarce a rock or ruin, or broken fountain, or lonely glen, about which he has not some marvelous story; or, above all, some golden legend; for never was poor devil so munificent in dispensing hidden treasures.

A few evenings since we took a long stroll of the kind, in which Mateo was more than usually communicative. It was toward sunset that we sallied forth from the great Gate of Justice, and ascending an alley of trees, Mateo paused under a clump of fig and pomegranate trees at the foot of a huge ruined tower, called the Tower of the Seven Vaults (*de los siete suelos*). Here, pointing to a low archway at the foundation of the tower, he informed me, in an undertone, was the lurking-place of a monstrous sprite or hobgoblin called the *Belludo*, which had infested the tower ever since the time of the Moors; guarding, it is supposed, the treasures of a Moorish king. Sometimes it issues forth in the dead of the night, and scours the avenues of the Alhambra and the streets of Granada in the shape of a headless horse, pursued by six dogs, with terrific yells and howlings.

"But have you ever met with it yourself, Mateo, in any of your rambles?"

"No, señor; but my grandfather the tailor knew several persons who had seen it; for it went about much more in his time than at present: sometimes in one shape, sometimes in another. Everybody in Granada has heard of the *Belludo*, for the old women and nurses frighten the children with it when they cry. Some say it is the spirit of a cruel Moorish king who killed his six sons, and buried them in these vaults, and that they hunt him at nights in revenge."

Mateo went on to tell many particulars about this redoubtable hobgoblin, which has, in fact, been time out of mind a favorite theme of nursery tale and popular tradition in Granada, and is mentioned in some of the antiquated guide-books. When he had finished, we passed on, skirting the fruitful orchards of the *Generaliffe*; among the trees of which two or three nightingales were pouring forth a rich

strain of melody. Behind these orchards we passed a number of Moorish tanks, with a door cut into the rocky bosom of the hill, but closed up. These tanks Mateo informed me were favorite bathing-places of himself and his comrades in boyhood, until frightened away by a story of a hideous Moor, who used to issue forth from the door in the rock to entrap unwary bathers.

Leaving these haunted tanks behind us, we pursued our ramble up a solitary mule-path that wound among the hills, and soon found ourselves amid wild and melancholy mountains, destitute of trees, and here and there tinted with scanty verdure. Everything within sight was severe and sterile, and it was scarcely possible to realize the idea that but a short distance behind us was the Generaliffe, with its blooming orchards and terraced gardens, and that we were in the vicinity of delicious Granada, that city of groves and fountains. But such is the nature of Spain—wild and stern the moment it escapes from cultivation, the desert and the garden are ever side by side.

The narrow defile up which we were passing is called, according to Mateo, *el Barranco de la Tiraja*, or the ravine of the jar.

“And why so, Mateo?” inquired I.

“Because, señor, a jar full of Moorish gold was found here in old times.” The brain of poor Mateo is continually running upon these golden legends.

“But what is the meaning of the cross I see yonder upon a heap of stones in that narrow part of the ravine?”

“Oh! that’s nothing—a muleteer was murdered there some years since.”

“So then, Mateo, you have robbers and murderers even at the gates of the Alhambra.”

“Not at present, señor—that was formerly, when there used to be many loose fellows about the fortress; but they’ve all been weeded out. Not but that the gypsies, who live in caves in the hillsides just out of the fortress, are, many of them, fit for anything; but we have had no murder about

here for a long time past. The man who murdered the muleteer was hanged in the fortress."

Our path continued up the barranco, with a bold, rugged height to our left, called the Silla del Moro, or chair of the Moor; from a tradition that the unfortunate Boabdil fled thither during a popular insurrection, and remained all day seated on the rocky summit, looking mournfully down upon his factious city.

We at length arrived on the highest part of the promontory above Granada, called the Mountain of the Sun. The evening was approaching; the setting sun just gilded the loftiest heights. Here and there a solitary shepherd might be descried driving his flock down the declivities to be folded for the night, or a muleteer and his lagging animals threading some mountain path, to arrive at the city gates before nightfall.

Presently the deep tones of the cathedral bell came swelling up the defiles, proclaiming the hour of Oracion, or prayer. The note was responded to from the belfry of every church, and from the sweet bells of the convents among the mountains. The shepherd paused on the fold of the hill, the muleteer in the midst of the road; each took off his hat, and remained motionless for a time, murmuring his evening prayer. There is always something solemn and pleasing in this custom; by which, at a melodious signal, every human being throughout the land recites, at the same moment, a tribute of thanks to God for the mercies of the day. It diffuses a transient sanctity over the land, and the sight of the sun sinking in all his glory adds not a little to the solemnity of the scene. In the present instance, the effect was heightened by the wild and lonely nature of the place. We were on the naked and broken summit of the haunted Mountain of the Sun, where ruined tanks and cisterns, and the mouldering foundations of extensive buildings, spoke of former populousness, but where all was now silent and desolate.

As we were wandering among these traces of old times, Mateo pointed out to me a circular pit that seemed to pene-

trate deep into the bosom of the mountain. It was evidently a deep well, dug by the indefatigable Moors, to obtain their favorite element in its greatest purity. Mateo, however, had a different story, and much more to his humor. This was, according to tradition, an entrance to the subterranean caverns of the mountain, in which Boabdil and his court lay bound in magic spell; and from whence they sallied forth at night, at allotted times, to revisit their ancient abodes.

The deepening twilight, which in this climate is of such short duration, admonished us to leave this haunted ground. As we descended the mountain defiles, there was no longer herdsman or muleteer to be seen, nor anything to be heard but our own footsteps and the lonely chirping of the cricket. The shadows of the valleys grew deeper and deeper, until all was dark around us. The lofty summit of the Sierra Nevada alone retained a lingering gleam of daylight, its snowy peaks glaring against the dark blue firmament; and seeming close to us, from the extreme purity of the atmosphere.

"How near the Sierra looks this evening!" said Mateo, "it seems as if you could touch it with your hand, and yet it is many long leagues off." While he was speaking a star appeared over the snowy summit of the mountain, the only one yet visible in the heavens, and so pure, so large, so bright and beautiful as to call forth ejaculations of delight from honest Mateo.

"Que lucero hermoso!—que claro y limpio es!—no pueda ser lucero mas brillante!"

(What a beautiful star! how clear and lucid!—no star could be more brilliant!)

I have often remarked this sensibility of the common people of Spain to the charms of natural objects. The luster of a star—the beauty or fragrance of a flower—the crystal purity of a fountain, will inspire them with a kind of poetical delight—and then what euphonious words their magnificent language affords, with which to give utterance to their transports!

"But what lights are those, Mateo, which I see twink-

ling along the Sierra Nevada, just below the snowy region, and which might be taken for stars, only that they are ruddy and against the dark side of the mountain?"

"Those, *senor*, are fires made by the men who gather snow and ice for the supply of Granada. They go up every afternoon with mules and asses, and take turns, some to rest and warm themselves by the fires, while others fill their panniers with ice. They then set off down the mountain, so as to reach the gates of Granada before sunrise. That Sierra Nevada, *senor*, is a lump of ice in the middle of Andalusia, to keep it all cool in summer."

It was now completely dark; we were passing through the barranco where stood the cross of the murdered muleteer, when I beheld a number of lights moving at a distance and apparently advancing up the ravine. On nearer approach they proved to be torches borne by a train of uncouth figures arrayed in black; it would have been a procession dreary enough at any time, but was peculiarly so in this wild and solitary place.

Mateo drew near and told me in a low voice that it was a funeral train bearing a corpse to the burying ground among the hills.

As the procession passed by, the lugubrious light of the torches, falling on the rugged features and funereal weeds of the attendants, had the most fantastic effect, but was perfectly ghastly as it revealed the countenance of the corpse, which, according to Spanish custom, was borne uncovered on an open bier. I remained for some time gazing after the dreary train as it wound up the dark defile of the mountain. It put me in mind of the old story of a procession of demons, bearing the body of a sinner up the crater of Stromboli.

"Ah, *senor*," cried Mateo, "I could tell you a story of a procession once seen among these mountains—but then you would laugh at me, and say it was one of the legacies of my grandfather the tailor."

"By no means, Mateo. There is nothing I relish more than a marvelous tale."

“Well, senor, it is about one of those very men we have been talking of, who gather snow on the Sierra Nevada. You must know that a great many years since, in my grandfather’s time, there was an old fellow, Tio Nicolo by name, who had filled the panniers of his mules with snow and ice, and was returning down the mountain. Being very drowsy, he mounted upon the mule, and soon falling asleep, went with his head nodding and bobbing about from side to side, while his sure-footed old mule stepped along the edge of precipices, and down steep and broken barrancos just as safe and steady as if it had been on plain ground. At length Tio Nicolo awoke, and gazed about him, and rubbed his eyes—and in good truth he had reason—the moon shone almost as bright as day, and he saw the city below him, as plain as your hand, and shining with its white buildings like a silver platter in the moonshine; but lord! senor!—it was nothing like the city he left a few hours before. Instead of the cathedral with its great dome and turrets, and the churches with their spires, and the convents with their pinnacles all surmounted with the blessed cross, he saw nothing but Moorish mosques, and minarets, and cupolas, all topped off with glittering crescents, such as you see on the Barbary flags. Well, senor, as you may suppose, Tio Nicolo was mightily puzzled at all this, but while he was gazing down upon the city, a great army came marching up the mountain; winding along the ravines, sometimes in the moonshine, sometimes in the shade. As it drew nigh, he saw that there were horse and foot, all in Moorish armor. Tio Nicolo tried to scramble out of their way, but his old mule stood stockstill and refused to budge, trembling at the same time like a leaf—for dumb beasts, senor, are just as much frightened at such things as human beings. Well, senor, the hobgoblin army came marching by: there were men that seemed to blow trumpets, and others to beat drums and strike cymbals, yet never a sound did they make; they all moved on without the least noise, just as I have seen painted armies move across the stage in the theater of Granada, and all looked as

pale as death. At last in the rear of the army, between two black Moorish horsemen, rode the grand inquisitor of Granada, on a mule as white as snow. Tio Nicolo wondered to see him in such company; for the inquisitor was famous for his hatred of Moors, and indeed of all kinds of infidels, Jews and heretics, and used to hunt them out with fire and scourge—however, Tio Nicolo felt himself safe, now that there was a priest of such sanctity at hand. So, making the sign of the cross, he called out for his benediction, when—hombre! he received a blow that sent him and his old mule over the edge of a steep bank, down which they rolled, head over heels, to the bottom. Tio Nicolo did not come to his senses until long after sunrise, when he found himself at the bottom of a deep ravine, his mule grazing beside him, and his panniers of snow completely melted. He crawled back to Granada sorely bruised and battered, and was glad to find the city looking as usual, with Christian churches and crosses. When he told the story of his night's adventure every one laughed at him: some said he had dreamed it all, as he dozed on his mule, others thought it all a fabrication of his own. But what was strange, senor, and made people afterward think more seriously of the matter, was that the grand inquisitor died within the year. I have often heard my grandfather, the tailor, say that there was more meant by that hobgoblin army bearing off the resemblance of the priest than folks dared to surmise."

"Then you would insinuate, friend Mateo, that there is a kind of Moorish limbo, or purgatory, in the bowels of these mountains; to which the padre inquisitor was borne off."

"God forbid—senor!—I know nothing of the matter—I only relate what I heard from my grandfather."

By the time Mateo had finished the tale which I have more succinctly related, and which was interlarded with many comments, and spun out with minute details, we reached the gate of the Alhambra.

THE COURT OF LIONS

THE peculiar charm of this old dreamy palace is its power of calling up vague reveries and picturings of the past, and thus clothing naked realities with the illusions of the memory and the imagination. As I delight to walk in these "vain shadows," I am prone to seek those parts of the Alhambra which are most favorable to this phantasmagoria of the mind; and none are more so than the Court of Lions and its surrounding halls. Here the hand of time has fallen the lightest, and the traces of Moorish elegance and splendor exist in almost their original brilliancy. Earthquakes have shaken the foundations of this pile, and rent its rudest towers, yet see—not one of those slender columns has been displaced, not an arch of that light and fragile colonnade has given way, and all the fairy fretwork of these domes, apparently as unsubstantial as the crystal fabrics of a morning's frost, yet exist after the lapse of centuries, almost as fresh as if from the hand of the Moslem artist.

I write in the midst of these mementos of the past, in the fresh hour of early morning, in the fated hall of the Abencerrages. The blood-stained fountain, the legendary monument of their massacre, is before me; the lofty jet almost casts its dew upon my paper. How difficult to reconcile the ancient tale of violence and blood with the gentle and peaceful scene around. Everything here appears calculated to inspire kind and happy feelings, for everything is delicate and beautiful. The very light falls tenderly from above, through the lantern of a dome tinted and wrought as if by fairy hands. Through the ample and fretted arch of the portal, I behold the Court of Lions, with brilliant sunshine gleaming along its colonnades and sparkling in its fountains. The lively

swallow dives into the court, and then surging upward darts away twittering over the roof; the busy bee toils humming among the flower beds, and painted butterflies hover from plant to plant, and flutter up, and sport with each other in the sunny air.—It needs but a slight exertion of the fancy to picture some pensive beauty of the harem, loitering in these secluded haunts of Oriental luxury.

He, however, who would behold this scene under an aspect more in unison with its fortunes, let him come when the shadows of evening temper the brightness of the court and throw a gloom into the surrounding halls—then nothing can be more serenely melancholy, or more in harmony with the tale of departed grandeur.

At such times I am apt to seek the Hall of Justice, whose deep shadowy arcades extend across the upper end of the court. Here were performed, in presence of Ferdinand and Isabella, and their triumphant court, the pompous ceremonies of high-mass, on taking possession of the Alhambra. The very cross is still to be seen upon the wall, where the altar was erected, and where officiated the grand cardinal of Spain, and others of the highest religious dignitaries of the land.

I picture to myself the scene when this place was filled with the conquering host, that mixture of mitred prelate, and shorn monk, and steel-clad knight, and silken courtier: when crosses and croziers and religious standards were mingled with proud armorial ensigns and the banners of the haughty chiefs of Spain, and flaunted in triumph through these Moslem halls. I picture to myself Columbus, the future discoverer of a world, taking his modest stand in a remote corner, the humble and neglected spectator of the pageant. I see in imagination the Catholic sovereigns prostrating themselves before the altar and pouring forth thanks for their victory, while the vaults resound with sacred minstrelsy and the deep-toned *Te Deum*.

The transient illusion is over—the pageant melts from the fancy—monarch, priest and warrior return into oblivion, with the poor Moslems over whom they exulted. The hall of their

triumph is waste and desolate. The bat flits about its twilight vaults, and the owl hoots from the neighboring tower of Comares. The Court of the Lions has also its share of supernatural legends. I have already mentioned the belief in the murmuring of voices and clanking of chains, made at night by the spirits of the murdered Abencerrages. Mateo Ximenes, a few evenings since, at one of the gatherings in Dame Antonia's apartment, related a fact which happened within the knowledge of his grandfather, the legendary tailor. There was an invalid soldier, who had charge of the Alhambra to show it to strangers. As he was one evening about twilight passing through the Court of Lions, he heard footsteps in the Hall of the Abencerrages. Supposing some loungers to be lingering there, he advanced to attend upon them, when, to his astonishment, he beheld four Moors richly dressed, with gilded cuirasses and scimiters, and poniards glittering with precious stones. They were walking to and fro with solemn pace, but paused and beckoned to him. The old soldier, however, took to flight; and could never afterward be prevailed upon to enter the Alhambra. Thus it is that men sometimes turn their backs upon fortune; for it is the firm opinion of Mateo that the Moors intended to reveal the place where their treasures lay buried. A successor to the invalid soldier was more knowing; he came to the Alhambra poor, but at the end of a year went off to Malaga, bought horses, set up a carriage, and still lives there, one of the richest as well as oldest men of the place: all which, Mateo sagely surmises, was in consequence of his finding out the golden secret of these phantom Moors.

On entering the Court of the Lions, a few evenings since, I was startled at beholding a turbaned Moor quietly seated near the fountain. It seemed, for a moment, as if one of the stories of Mateo Ximenes were realized, and some ancient inhabitant of the Alhambra had broken the spell of centuries and become visible. It proved, however, to be a mere ordinary mortal; a native of Tetuan in Barbary, who had a shop in the Zacatin of Granada, where he sold rhubarb,

trinkets and perfumes. As he spoke Spanish fluently, I was enabled to hold conversation with him, and found him shrewd and intelligent. He told me that he came up the hill occasionally in the summer to pass a part of the day in the Alhambra, which reminded him of the old palaces in Barbary, which were built and adorned in similar style, though with less magnificence.

As we walked about the palace he pointed out several of the Arabic inscriptions as possessing much poetic beauty.

"Ah! senor," said he, "when the Moors held Granada, they were a gayer people than they are nowadays. They thought only of love, of music, and of poetry. They made stanzas upon every occasion and set them all to music. He who could make the best verses, and she who had the most tuneful voice, might be sure of favor and preferment. In those days, if any one asked for bread the reply was, 'Make me a couplet'; and the poorest beggar, if he begged in rhyme, would often be rewarded with a piece of gold."

"And is the popular feeling for poetry," said I, "entirely lost among you?"

"By no means, senor; the people of Barbary, even those of the lower classes, still make couplets, and good ones too, as in the old time, but talent is not rewarded as it was then: the rich prefer the jingle of their gold to the sound of poetry or music."

As he was talking, his eye caught one of the inscriptions that foretold perpetuity to the power and glory of the Moslem monarchs, the masters of the pile. He shook his head and shrugged his shoulders as he interpreted it. "Such might have been the case," said he; "the Moslems might still have been reigning in the Alhambra, had not Boabdil been a traitor and given up his capitol to the Christians. The Spanish monarchs would never have been able to conquer it by open force."

I endeavored to vindicate the memory of the unlucky Boabdil from this aspersion, and to show that the dissensions which led to the downfall of the Moorish throne originated

in the cruelty of his tiger-hearted father; but the Moor would admit of no palliation.

"Abul Hassan," said he, "might have been cruel, but he was brave, vigilant and patriotic. Had he been properly seconded, Granada would still have been ours; but his son Boabdil thwarted his plans, crippled his power, sowed treason in his palace and dissension in his camp. May the curse of God light upon him for his treachery." With these words the Moor left the Alhambra.

The indignation of my turbaned companion agrees with an anecdote related by a friend, who, in the course of a tour in Barbary, had an interview with the Pasha of Tetuan. The Moorish governor was particular in his inquiries about the soil, the climate and resources of Spain, and especially concerning the favored regions of Andalusia, the delights of Granada and the remains of its royal palace. The replies awakened all those fond recollections, so deeply cherished by the Moors, of the power and splendor of their ancient empire in Spain. Turning to his Moslem attendants, the pasha stroked his beard, and broke forth in passionate lamentations that such a scepter should have fallen from the sway of true believers. He consoled himself, however, with the persuasion that the power and prosperity of the Spanish nation were on the decline; that a time would come when the Moors would reconquer their rightful domains; and that the day was, perhaps, not far distant, when Mohammedan worship would again be offered up in the mosque of Cordova, and a Mohammedan prince sit on his throne in the Alhambra.

Such is the general aspiration and belief among the Moors of Barbary; who consider Spain, and especially Andalusia, their rightful heritage, of which they have been despoiled by treachery and violence. These ideas are fostered and perpetuated by the descendants of the exiled Moors of Granada, scattered among the cities of Barbary. Several of these reside in Tetuan, preserving their ancient names, such as Paez and Medina, and refraining from intermarriage with any families who cannot claim the same high origin. Their vaunted

lineage is regarded with a degree of popular deference rarely shown in Mohammedan communities to any hereditary distinction except in the royal line.

These families, it is said, continue to sigh after the terrestrial paradise of their ancestors, and to put up prayers in their mosques on Fridays, imploring Allah to hasten the time when Granada shall be restored to the faithful; an event to which they look forward as fondly and confidently as did the Christian crusaders to the recovery of the Holy Sepulcher. Nay, it is added, that some of them retain the ancient maps and deeds of the estates and gardens of their ancestors at Granada, and even the keys of the houses; holding them as evidences of their hereditary claims, to be produced at the anticipated day of restoration.

BOABDIL EL CHICO

MY conversation with the Moor in the Court of Lions set me to musing on the singular fate of Boabdil. Never was surname more applicable than that bestowed upon him by his subjects, of "El Zogoybi," or "the unlucky." His misfortunes began almost in his cradle. In his tender youth he was imprisoned and menaced with death by an inhuman father, and only escaped through a mother's stratagem; in after years his life was embittered and repeatedly endangered by the hostilities of a usurping uncle; his reign was distracted by external invasions and internal feuds; he was alternately the foe, the prisoner, the friend, and always the dupe of Ferdinand, until conquered and dethroned by the mingled craft and force of that perfidious monarch. An exile from his native land, he took refuge with one of the princes of Africa, and fell obscurely in battle fighting in the cause of a stranger. His misfortunes ceased not with his death. If Boabdil cherished a desire to leave an honorable

name on the historic page, how cruelly has he been defrauded of his hopes. Who is there that has turned the least attention to the romantic history of the Moorish domination in Spain, without kindling with indignation at the alleged atrocities of Boabdil? Who has not been touched with the woes of his lovely and gentle queen, subjected by him to a trial of life and death on a false charge of infidelity? Who has not been shocked by the alleged murder of his sister and her two children in a transport of passion? Who has not felt his blood boil at the inhuman massacre of the gallant Abencerrages, thirty-six of whom, it is affirmed, he caused to be beheaded in the Court of the Lions? All these charges have been reiterated in various forms; they have passed into ballads, dramas and romances, until they have taken too thorough possession of the public mind to be eradicated.

There is not a foreigner of education that visits the Alhambra, but asks for the fountain where the Abencerrages were beheaded; and gazes with horror at the grated gallery where the queen is said to have been confined; not a peasant of the Vega or the Sierra, but sings the story in rude couplets to the accompaniment of his guitar, while his hearers learn to execrate the very name of Boabdil.

Never, however, was name more foully and unjustly slandered. I have examined all the authentic chronicles and letters written by Spanish authors contemporary with Boabdil; some of whom were in the confidence of the Catholic sovereigns, and actually present in the camp throughout the war; I have examined all the Arabian authorities I could get access to through the medium of translation, and can find nothing to justify these dark and hateful accusations.

The whole of these tales may be traced to a work commonly called "The Civil Wars of Granada," containing a pretended history of the feuds of the Zegries and Abencerrages during the last struggle of the Moorish empire. This work appeared originally in Spanish, and professed to be translated from the Arabic by one Gines Perez de Hita, an inhabitant of Murcia. It has since passed into various lan-

guages, and Florian has taken from it much of the fable of his Gonsalvo of Cordova. It has, in a great measure, usurped the authority of real history, and is currently believed by the people and especially the peasantry of Granada. The whole of it, however, is a mass of fiction, mingled with a few disfigured truths, which give it an air of veracity. It bears internal evidence of its falsity, the manners and customs of the Moors being extravagantly misrepresented in it, and scenes depicted totally incompatible with their habits and their faith, and which never could have been recorded by a Mahometan writer.

I confess there seems to me something almost criminal in the willful perversions of this work. Great latitude is undoubtedly to be allowed to romantic fiction, but there are limits which it must not pass, and the names of the distinguished dead, which belong to history, are no more to be calumniated than those of the illustrious living. One would have thought, too, that the unfortunate Boabdil had suffered enough for his justifiable hostility to Spaniards, by being stripped of his kingdom, without having his name thus wantonly traduced and rendered a by-word and a theme of infamy in his native land and in the very mansion of his fathers!

It is not intended hereby to affirm that the transactions imputed to Boabdil are totally without historic foundation, but as far as they can be traced they appear to have been the arts of his father, Abul Hassan, who is represented, by both Christian and Arabian chroniclers, as being of a cruel and ferocious nature. It was he who put to death the cavaliers of the illustrious line of the Abencerrages, upon suspicion of their being engaged in a conspiracy to dispossess him of his throne.

The story of the accusation of the queen of Boabdil, and of her confinement in one of the towers, may also be traced to an incident in the life of his tiger-hearted father. Abul Hassan, in his advanced age, married a beautiful Christian captive of noble descent, who took the Moorish appellation of

Zorayda, by whom he had two sons. She was of an ambitious spirit and anxious that her children should succeed to the crown. For this purpose she worked upon the suspicious temper of the king, inflaming him with jealousies of his children by his other wives and concubines, whom she accused of plotting against his throne and life. Some of them were slain by the ferocious father. Ayxa la Horra, the virtuous mother of Boabdil, who had once been his cherished favorite, became likewise the object of his suspicion. He confined her and her son in the tower of Comares, and would have sacrificed Boabdil to his fury, but that his tender mother lowered him from the tower, in the night, by means of the scarfs of herself and her attendants, and thus enabled him to escape to Guadix.

Such is the only shadow of a foundation that I can find for the story of the accused and captive queen; and in this it appears that Boabdil was the persecuted instead of the persecutor.

Throughout the while of his brief, turbulent and disastrous reign, Boabdil gives evidences of a mild and amiable character. He in the first instance won the hearts of the people by his affable and gracious manners; he was always peaceable, and never inflicted any severity of punishment upon those who occasionally rebelled against him. He was personally brave, but he wanted moral courage, and in times of difficulty and perplexity was wavering and irresolute. This feebleness of spirit hastened his downfall, while it deprived him of that heroic grace which would have given a grandeur and dignity to his fate, and rendered him worthy of closing the splendid drama of the Moslem domination in Spain.

MEMENTOS OF BOABDIL

WHILE my mind was still warm with the subject of the unfortunate Boabdil, I set forth to trace the mementos connected with his story, which yet exist in this scene of his sovereignty and his misfortunes. In the picture gallery of the Palace of the Generaliffe hangs his portrait. The face is mild, handsome and somewhat melancholy, with a fair complexion and yellow hair; if it be a true representation of the man, he may have been wavering and uncertain, but there is nothing of cruelty or unkindness in his aspect.

I next visited the dungeon wherein he was confined in his youthful days, when his cruel father meditated his destruction. It is a vaulted room in the tower of Comares, under the Hall of Ambassadors. A similar room, separated by a narrow passage, was the prison of his mother, the virtuous Ayxa la Horra. The walls are of prodigious thickness, and the small windows secured by iron bars. A narrow stone gallery, with a low parapet, extends round three sides of the tower just below the windows, but at a considerable height from the ground. From this gallery, it is presumed, the queen lowered her son with the scarfs of herself and her female attendants, during the darkness of night, to the hill-side, at the foot of which waited a domestic with a fleet steed to bear the prince to the mountains.

As I paced this gallery, my imagination pictured the anxious queen leaning over the parapet, and listening, with the throbbings of a mother's heart, to the last echo of the horses' hoofs, as her son scoured along the narrow valley of the Darro.

My next search was for the gate by which Boabdil departed from the Alhambra, when about to surrender his

capital. With the melancholy caprice of a broken spirit, he requested of the Catholic monarchs that no one afterward might be permitted to pass through this gate. His prayer, according to ancient chronicles, was complied with, through the sympathy of Isabella, and the gate walled up. For some time I inquired in vain for such a portal; at length my humble attendant, Mateo, learned among the old residents of the fortress that a ruinous gateway still existed, by which, according to tradition, the Moorish king had left the fortress, but which had never been open within the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

He conducted me to the spot. The gateway is in the center of what was once an immense tower, called *la Torre de los Siete Suelos*, or, the Tower of the Seven Moors. It is a place famous in the superstitious stories of the neighborhood, for being the scene of strange apparitions and Moorish enchantments.

This once redoubtable tower is now a mere wreck, having been blown up with gunpowder by the French when they abandoned the fortress. Great masses of the wall lie scattered about, buried in the luxuriant herbage, or overshadowed by vines and fig-trees. The arch of the gateway, though rent by the shock, still remains; but the last wish of poor Boabdil has been again, though unintentionally, fulfilled, for the portal has been closed up by loose stones gathered from the ruins, and remains impassable.

Following up the route of the Moslem monarch as it remains on record, I crossed on horseback the hill of Les Martyrs, keeping along the garden of the convent of the same name, and thence down a rugged ravine, beset by thickets of aloes and Indian figs, and lined by caves and hovels swarming with gypsies. It was the road taken by Boabdil to avoid passing through the city. The descent was so steep and broken that I was obliged to dismount and lead my horse.

Emerging from the ravine, and passing by the Puerta de los Molinos (the Gate of the Mills), I issued forth upon the

public promenade, called the Prado, and pursuing the course of the Xenil, arrived at a small Moorish mosque, now converted into the chapel or hermitage of San Sebastian. A tablet on the wall relates that on this spot Boabdil surrendered the keys of Granada to the Castilian sovereigns.

From thence I rode slowly across the Vega to a village where the family and household of the unhappy king had awaited him: for he had sent them forward on the preceding night from the Alhambra, that his mother and wife might not participate in his personal humiliation, or be exposed to the gaze of the conquerors.

Following on in the route of the melancholy band of royal exiles, I arrived at the foot of a chain of barren and dreary heights, forming the skirt of the Alpuxarra mountains. From the summit of one of these the unfortunate Boabdil took his last look at Granada. It bears a name expressive of his sorrows—La Cuesta de las Lagrimas (the Hill of Tears). Beyond it a sandy road winds across a rugged cheerless waste, doubly dismal to the unhappy monarch, as it led to exile; behind, in the distance, lies the “enameled Vega,” with the Xenil shining among its bowers, and Granada beyond.

I spurred my horse to the summit of a rock where Boabdil uttered his last sorrowful exclamation, as he turned his eyes from taking their farewell gaze. It is still denominated *el ultimo suspiro del Moro* (the last sigh of the Moor). Who can wonder at his anguish at being expelled from such a kingdom and such an abode? With the Alhambra he seemed to be yielding up all the honors of his line, and all the glories and delights of life.

It was here, too, that his affliction was imbittered by the reproach of his mother, Ayxa, who had so often assisted him in times of peril, and had vainly sought to instil into him her own resolute spirit. “You do well,” said she, “to weep as a woman over what you could not defend as a man!”—A speech that savors more of the pride of the princess than the tenderness of the mother.

When this anecdote was related to Charles V., by Bishop Guevara, the emperor joined in the expression of scorn at the weakness of the wavering Boabdil. "Had I been he, or he been I," said the haughty potentate, "I would rather have made this Alhambra my sepulcher than have lived without a kingdom in the Alpuxarras."

How easy it is for them in power and prosperity to preach heroism to the vanquished! How little can they understand that life itself may rise in value with the unfortunate when naught but life remains.

THE TOWER OF LAS INFANTAS

IN an evening's stroll up a narrow glen, overshadowed by fig-trees, pomegranates and myrtles, that divides the land of the fortress from those of the Generaliffe, I was struck with the romantic appearance of a Moorish tower in the outer wall of the Alhambra that rose high above the treetops, and caught the ruddy rays of the setting sun. A solitary window, at a great height, commanded a view of the glen, and as I was regarding it a young female looked out, with her head adorned with flowers. She was evidently superior to the usual class of people that inhabit the old towers of the fortress; and this sudden and picturesque glimpse of her reminded me of the descriptions of captive beauties in fairy tales. The fanciful associations of my mind were increased on being informed by my attendant, Mateo, that this was the tower of the Princesses (la Torre de las Infantas), so called from having been, according to tradition, the residence of the daughters of the Moorish kings. I have since visited the tower. It is not generally shown to strangers, though well worthy attention, for the interior is equal for beauty of architecture and delicacy of ornament to any part of the palace. The elegance of its central hall, with its marble fountain, its lofty arches and richly fretted dome; the arabesques and

stucco work of the small, but well proportioned chambers, though injured by time and neglect, all accord with the story of its being anciently the abode of royal beauty.

The little old fairy queen who lives under the staircase of the Alhambra, and frequents the evening tertulias of Dame Antonia, tells some fanciful traditions about three Moorish princesses who were once shut up in this tower by their father, a tyrant king of Granada, and were only permitted to ride out at night about the hills, when no one was permitted to come in their way, under pain of death. They still, according to her account, may be seen occasionally when the moon is in the full, riding in lonely places along the mountain side, on palfreys richly caparisoned, and sparkling with jewels, but they vanish on being spoken to.

—But before I relate anything further respecting these princesses, the reader may be anxious to know something about the fair inhabitant of the tower with her head dressed with flowers, who looked out from the lofty window. She proved to be the newly married spouse of the worthy adjutant of invalids; who, though well stricken in years, had had the courage to take to his bosom a young and buxom Andalusian damsel. May the good old cavalier be happy in his choice, and find the tower of the Princesses a more secure residence for female beauty than it seems to have proved in the time of the Moslems, if we may believe the following legend.

THE HOUSE OF THE WEATHERCOCK

ON the brow of the lofty hill of the Albaycin, the highest part of the city of Granada, stand the remains of what was once a royal palace, founded shortly after the conquest of Spain by the Arabs. It is now converted into a manufactory, and has fallen into such obscurity that it cost me much trouble to find it, notwithstanding that I had the assistance of the sagacious and all-knowing Mateo Ximenes. This

edifice still bears the name by which it has been known for centuries; namely, la Casa del Gallo de Viento; that is, the House of the Weathercock.

It was so called from a bronze figure of a warrior on horseback, armed with shield and spear, erected on one of its turrets, and turning with every wind, bearing an Arabic motto, which, translated into Spanish, was as follows:

Dici el Sabio Aben Habuz,
Que asi se defiende el Anduluz.

In this way, says Aben Habuz the wise,
The Andalusian his foe defies.

This Aben Habuz was a captain who served in the invading army of Taric, and was left as alcaide of Granada. He is supposed to have intended this warlike effigy as a perpetual memorial to the Moorish inhabitants that, surrounded as they were by foes, and subject to sudden invasion, their safety depended upon being always ready for the field.

Other traditions, however, give a different account of this Aben Habuz and his palace, and affirm that his bronze horseman was originally a talisman of great virtue, though in after ages it lost its magic properties and degenerated into a weathercock. The following are the traditions alluded to.

THE LEGEND OF THE ARABIAN AS- TROLOGER

IN old times, many hundred years ago, there was a Moorish king named Aben Habuz, who reigned over the kingdom of Granada. He was a retired conqueror; that is to say, one who, having in his more youthful days led a life of constant foray and depredation, now that he was grown old and superannuated, "languished for repose," and desired nothing more than to live at peace with all the world, to husband his

laurels, and to enjoy in quiet the possessions he had wrested from his neighbors.

It so happened, however, that this most reasonable and pacific old monarch had young rivals to deal with—princes full of his early passion for fame and fighting, and who had some scores to settle which he had run up with their fathers; he had also some turbulent and discontented districts of his own territories among the Alpuxarra mountains, which, during the days of his vigor, he had treated with a high hand; and which, now that he languished for repose, were prone to rise in rebellion and to threaten to march to Granada and drive him from his throne. To make the matter worse, as Granada is surrounded by wild and craggy mountains which hide the approach of an enemy, the unfortunate Aben Habuz was kept in a constant state of vigilance and alarm, not knowing in what quarter hostilities might break out.

It was in vain that he built watch-towers on the mountains and stationed guards at every pass, with orders to make fires by night and smoke by day, on the approach of an enemy. His alert foes would baffle every precaution, and come breaking out of some unthought-of defile—ravage his lands beneath his very nose, and then make off with prisoners and booty to the mountains. Was ever peaceable and retired conqueror in a more uncomfortable predicament!

While the pacific Aben Habuz was harassed by these perplexities and molestations, an ancient Arabian physician arrived at his court. His gray beard descended to his girdle, and he had every mark of extreme age, yet he had traveled almost the whole way from Egypt on foot, with no other aid than a staff marked with hieroglyphics. His fame had preceded him. His name was Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ayub; he was said to have lived ever since the days of Mahomet, and to be the son of Abu Ayub, the last of the companions of the prophet. He had, when a child, followed the conquering army of Amru into Egypt, where he had remained many

years studying the dark sciences, and particularly magic, among the Egyptian priests. It was moreover said that he had found out the secret of prolonging life, by means of which he had arrived to the great age of upward of two centuries; though, as he did not discover the secret until well stricken in years, he could only perpetuate his gray hairs and wrinkles.

This wonderful old man was very honorably entertained by the king, who, like most superannuated monarchs, began to take physicians into great favor. He would have assigned him an apartment in his palace, but the astrologer preferred a cave in the side of the hill which rises above the city of Granada, being the same on which the Alhambra has since been built. He caused the cave to be enlarged so as to form a spacious and lofty hall with a circular hole at the top, through which, as through a well, he could see the heavens and behold the stars even at mid-day. The walls of this hall were covered with Egyptian hieroglyphics, with cabalistic symbols, and with the figures of the stars in their signs. This hall he furnished with many implements, fabricated under his direction by cunning artificers of Granada, but the occult properties of which were only known to himself. In a little while the sage Ibrahim became the bosom counselor of the king, to whom he applied for advice in every emergency. Aben Habuz was once inveighing against the injustice of his neighbors, and bewailing the restless vigilance he had to observe to guard himself against their invasions. When he had finished the astrologer remained silent for a moment, and then replied, "Know, O king, that when I was in Egypt I beheld a great marvel devised by a pagan priestess of old. On a mountain above the city of Borsa, and overlooking the great valley of the Nile, was a figure of a ram, and above it a figure of a cock, both of molten brass and turning upon a pivot. Whenever the country was threatened with invasion, the ram would turn in the direction of the enemy and the cock would crow; upon this the inhabitants of the city knew of the danger, and of the quarter from

which it was approaching, and could take timely notice to guard against it."

"God is great!" exclaimed the pacific Aben Habuz; "what a treasure would be such a ram to keep an eye upon these mountains around me, and then such a cock to crow in time of danger! Allah Achbar! how securely I might sleep in my palace with such sentinels on the top!"

"Listen, O king," continued the astrologer gravely. "When the victorious Amru (God's peace be upon him!) conquered the city of Borsa, this talisman was destroyed; but I was present and examined it, and studied its secret and mystery, and can make one of like and even of greater virtues."

"O wise son of Abu Ayub," cried Aben Habuz, "better were such a talisman than all the watch-towers on the hills and sentinels upon the borders. Give me such a safeguard and the riches of my treasury are at thy command."

The astrologer immediately set to work to gratify the wishes of the monarch, shutting himself up in his astrological hall, and exerting the necromantic arts he had learned in Egypt, he summoned to his assistance the spirits and demons of the Nile. By his command they transported to his presence a mummy from a sepulchral chamber in the center of one of the Pyramids. It was the mummy of the priest who had aided by magic art in rearing that stupendous pile.

The astrologer opened the outer cases of the mummy and unfolded its many wrappers. On the breast of the corpse was a book written in Chaldaic characters. He seized it with trembling hand, then returning the mummy to its case, ordered the demons to transport it again to its dark and silent sepulcher in the Pyramid, there to await the final day of resurrection and judgment.

This book, say the traditions, was the book of knowledge given by God to Adam after his fall. It had been handed down from generation to generation, to King Solomon the Wise, and by the aid of the wonderful secrets in magic and art revealed in it he had built the temple of Jerusalem.

How it had come into the possession of the builder of the Pyramids, He only knows who knows all things.

Instructed by this mystic volume, and aided by the genii which it subjected to his command, the astrologer soon erected a great tower upon the top of the palace of Aben Habuz, which stood on the brow of the hill of the Albaycin. The tower was built of stones brought from Egypt, and taken, it is said, from one of the Pyramids. In the upper part of the tower was a circular hall, with windows looking toward every point of the compass, and before each window was a table, on which was arranged, as on a chess-board, a mimic army of horse and foot, with the effigy of the potentate that ruled in that direction; all carved of wood. To each of these tables there was a small lance, no bigger than a bodkin, on which were engraved certain mysterious Chaldaic characters. This hall was kept constantly closed by a gate of brass with a great lock of steel, the key of which was in possession of the king.

On the top of the tower was a bronze figure of a Moorish horseman, fixed on a pivot, with a shield on one arm and his lance elevated perpendicularly. The face of the horseman was toward the city, as if keeping guard over it; but if any foe were at hand, the figure would turn in that direction and would level the lance as if for action.

When this talisman was finished, Aben Habuz was all impatient to try its virtues; and longed as ardently for an invasion as he had ever sighed after repose. His desire was soon gratified. Tidings were brought early one morning, by the sentinel appointed to watch the tower, that the face of the brazen horseman was turned toward the mountains of Elvira, and that his lance pointed directly against the pass of Lope.

"Let the drums and trumpets sound to arms, and all Granada be put on the alert," said Aben Habuz.

"O king," said the astrologer, "let not your city be disquieted, nor your warriors called to arms; we need no aid or force to deliver you from your enemies. Dismiss your at-

tendants and let us proceed alone to the secret hall of the tower."

The ancient Aben Habuz mounted the staircase of the tower, leaning on the arm of the still more ancient Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ayub. They unlocked the brazen door and entered. The window that looked toward the pass of Lope was open. "In this direction," said the astrologer, "lies the danger—approach, O king, and behold the mystery of the table."

King Aben Habuz approached the seeming chess-board, on which were arranged the small wooden effigies; when lo! they were all in motion. The horses pranced and curveted, the warriors brandished their weapons, and there was a faint sound of drums and trumpets, and a clang of arms and neighing of steeds, but all no louder, nor more distinct, than the hum of the bee or summer-fly in the drowsy ear of him who lies at noontide in the shade.

"Behold, O king," said the astrologer, "a proof that thy enemies are even now in the field. They must be advancing through yonder mountains by the pass of Lope. Would you produce a panic and confusion among them, and cause them to abandon their enterprise and retreat without loss of life, strike these effigies with the butt end of this magic lance; but would you cause bloody feud and carnage among them, strike with the point."

A livid streak passed across the countenance of the pacific Aben Habuz; he seized the mimic lance with trembling eagerness and tottered toward the table; his gray beard wagged with chuckling exultation. "Son of Abu Ayub," exclaimed he, "I think we will have a little blood!"

So saying he thrust the magic lance into some of the pigmy effigies, and belabored others with the butt end; upon which the former fell, as dead, upon the board, and the rest turning upon each other, began, pell-mell, a chance medley fight.

It was with difficulty the astrologer could stay the hand of the most pacific of monarchs and prevent him from abso-

lutely exterminating his foes. At length he prevailed upon him to leave the tower, and to send out scouts to the mountains by the pass of Lope.

They returned with the intelligence that a Christian army had advanced through the heart of the Sierra, almost within sight of Granada, when a dissension having broken out among them, they had turned their weapons against each other, and after much slaughter had retreated over the border.

Aben Habuz was transported with joy on thus proving the efficacy of the talisman. "At length," said he, "I shall lead a life of tranquillity and have all my enemies in my power. O wise son of Abu Ayub, what can I bestow on thee in reward for such a blessing?"

"The wants of an old man and a philosopher, O king, are few and simple—grant me but the means of fitting up my cave as a suitable hermitage and I am content."

"How noble is the moderation of the truly wise!" exclaimed Aben Habuz, secretly pleased at the cheapness of the recompense. He summoned his treasurer and bade him dispense whatever sums might be required by Ibrahim to complete and furnish his hermitage.

The astrologer now gave orders to have various chambers hewn out of the solid rock, so as to form ranges of apartments connected with his astrological hall. These he caused to be furnished with luxurious ottomans and divans; and the walls to be hung with the richest silks of Damascus. "I am an old man," said he, "and can no longer rest my bones on stone couches; and these damp walls require covering."

He also had baths constructed and provided with all kinds of perfumery and aromatic oils; "for a bath," said he, "is necessary to counteract the rigidity of age, and to restore freshness and suppleness to the frame withered by study."

He caused the apartments to be hung with innumerable silver and crystal lamps, which he filled with a fragrant oil prepared according to a receipt discovered by him in the tombs of Egypt. This oil was perpetual in its nature, and

diffused a soft radiance like the tempered light of day. "The light of the sun," said he, "is too garish and violent for the eyes of an old man; and the light of the lamp is more congenial to the studies of a philosopher."

The treasurer of King Aben Habuz groaned at the sums daily demanded to fit up this hermitage, and he carried his complaints to the king. The royal word, however, was given—Aben Habuz shrugged his shoulders—"We must have patience," said he; "this old man has taken his idea of a philosophic retreat from the interior of the Pyramids and the vast ruins of Egypt; but all things have an end, and so will the furnishing of his cavern."

The king was in the right, the hermitage was at length completed and formed a sumptuous subterranean palace. "I am now content," said Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ayub, to the treasurer; "I will shut myself up in my cell and devote my time to study. I desire nothing more—nothing—except a trifling solace to amuse me at the intervals of mental labor."

"O wise Ibrahim, ask what thou wilt; I am bound to furnish all that is necessary for thy solitude."

"I would fain have then a few dancing women," said the philosopher.

"Dancing women!" echoed the treasurer with surprise.

"Dancing women," replied the sage gravely; "a few will suffice; for I am an old man and a philosopher, of simple habits and easily satisfied. Let them, however, be young and fair to look upon—for the sight of youth and beauty is refreshing to old age."

While the philosophic Ibrahim Ebn Ayub passed his time thus sagely in his hermitage, the pacific Aben Habuz carried on furious campaigns in effigy in his tower. It was a glorious thing for an old man like himself, of quiet habits, to have war made easy and to be enabled to amuse himself in his chamber by brushing away whole armies like so many swarms of flies. For a time he rioted in the indulgence of his humors, and even taunted and insulted his neighbors to

induce them to make incursions; but by degrees they grew wary from repeated disasters, until no one ventured to invade his territories. For many months the bronze horseman remained on the peace establishment with his lance elevated in the air, and the worthy old monarch began to repine at the want of his accustomed sport and to grow peevish at his monotonous tranquillity.

At length, one day, the talismanic horseman veered suddenly round, and, lowering his lance, made a dead point toward the mountains of Guadix. Aben Habuz hastened to his tower, but the magic table in that direction remained quiet—not a single warrior was in motion. Perplexed at the circumstance, he sent forth a troop of horse to scour the mountains and reconnoiter. They returned after three days' absence. Rodovan, the captain of the troop, addressed the king: "We have searched every mountain pass," said he, "but not a helm or spear was stirring. All that we have found in the course of our foray was a Christian damsel of surpassing beauty, sleeping at noontide beside a fountain, whom we have brought away captive."

"A damsel of surpassing beauty!" exclaimed Aben Habuz, his eyes gleaming with animation: "let her be conducted into my presence."—"Pardon me, O king!" replied Rodovan, "but our warfare at present is scanty, and yields but little harvest. I had hoped this chance gleanings would have been allowed for my services."

"Chance gleanings!" cried Aben Habuz. "What!—a damsel of surpassing beauty! By the head of my father! it is the choice fruits of warfare, only to be garnered up into the royal keeping.—Let the damsel be brought hither instantly."

The beautiful damsel was accordingly conducted into his presence. She was arrayed in the Gothic style with all the luxury of ornament that had prevailed among the Gothic Spaniards at the time of the Arabian conquest. Pearls of dazzling whiteness were entwined with her raven tresses; and jewels sparkled on her forehead, rivaling the luster of

her eyes. Around her neck was a golden chain, to which was suspended a silver lyre which hung by her side.

The flashes of her dark refulgent eye were like sparks of fire on the withered, yet combustible breast of Aben Habuz, and set it in a flame. The swimming voluptuousness of her gait made his senses reel. "Fairest of women," cried he, with rapture, "who and what art thou?"

"The daughter of one of the Gothic princes who lately ruled over this land. The armies of my father have been destroyed as if by magic among these mountains, he has been driven into exile and his daughter is a slave."

"Be comforted, beautiful princess—thou art no longer a slave, but a sovereign; turn thine eyes graciously upon Aben Habuz, and reign over him and his dominions."

"Beware, O king," whispered Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ayub; "this may be some spirit conjured up by the magicians of the Goths, and sent for thy undoing. Or it may be one of those northern sorceresses, who assume the most seducing forms to beguile the unwary. Methinks I read witchcraft in her eye and sorcery in every movement. Let my sovereign beware—this must be the enemy pointed out by the talisman."—"Son of Abu Ayub," replied the king, "you are a wise man and a conjurer, I grant—but you are little versed in the ways of woman. In the knowledge of the sex, I will yield to no man; no, not to the wise Solomon himself, notwithstanding the number of his wives and his concubines. As to this damsel, I see much comfort in her for my old days, even such comfort as David, the father of Solomon, found in the society of Abishag the Shunamite."

"Hearken, O king," rejoined the astrologer, suddenly changing his tone—"I have given thee many triumphs over thy enemies, and by means of my talisman, yet thou hast never given me share of the spoils; grant me this one stray captive to solace me in my retirement, and I am content."

"What!" cried Aben Habuz, "more women! hast thou not already dancing women to solace thee—what more wouldst thou desire?"

“Dancing women have I, it is true; but I have none that sing; and music is a balm to old age.—This captive, I perceive, beareth a silver lyre, and must be skilled in minstrelsy. Give her to me, I pray thee, to sooth my senses after the toil of study.”

The ire of the pacific monarch was kindled, and he loaded the philosopher with reproaches. The latter retired indignantly to his hermitage; but ere he departed, he again warned the monarch to beware of his beautiful captive. Where, in fact, is the old man in love that will listen to counsel? Aben Habuz had felt the full power of the witchery of the eye and the sorcery of movement, and the more he gazed the more he was enamored.

He resigned himself to the full sway of his passions. His only study was how to render himself amiable in the eyes of the Gothic beauty. He had not youth, it is true, to recommend him, but then he had riches: and when a lover is no longer young he becomes generous. The Zacatin of Granada was ransacked for the most precious merchandise of the East. Silks, jewels, precious gems and exquisite perfumes, all that Asia and Africa yielded of rich and rare, were lavished upon the princess. She received all as her due, and regarded them with the indifference of one accustomed to magnificence. All kinds of spectacles and festivities were devised for her entertainment; minstrelsy, dancing, tournaments, bull-fights.—Granada, for a time, was a scene of perpetual pageant. The Gothic princess seemed to take a delight in causing expense, as if she sought to drain the treasures of the monarch. There were no bounds to her caprice or to the extravagance of her ideas. Yet, notwithstanding all this munificence, the venerable Aben Habuz could not flatter himself that he had made any impression on her heart. She never frowned on him, it is true, but she had a singular way of baffling his tender advances. Whenever he began to plead his passion, she struck her silver lyre. There was a mystic charm in the sound: on hearing of it, an irresistible drowsiness seized upon the superannuated lover,

he fell asleep, and only woke when the temporary fumes of passion had evaporated. Still the dream of love had a bewitching power over his senses; so he continued to dream on; while all Granada scoffed at his infatuation and groaned at the treasures lavished for a song.

At length a danger burst over the head of Aben Habuz against which his talisman yielded him no warning. A rebellion broke out in the very heart of his capital; headed by the bold Rodovan. Aben Habuz was, for a time, besieged in his palace, and it was not without the greatest difficulty that he repelled his assailants and quelled the insurrection.

He now felt himself compelled once more to resort to the assistance of the astrologer. He found him still shut up in his hermitage, chewing the cud of resentment. "O wise son of Abu Ayub," said he, "what thou hast foretold, has, in some sort, come to pass. This Gothic princess has brought trouble and danger upon me."

"Is the king then disposed to put her away from him?" said the astrologer with animation.

"Sooner would I part with my kingdom!" replied Aben Habuz.

"What then is the need of disturbing me in my philosophical retirement?" said the astrologer, peevishly.

"Be not angry, O sagest of philosophers. I would fain have one more exertion of thy magic art. Devise some means by which I may be secure from internal treason, as well as outward war—some safe retreat, where I may take refuge and be at peace."

The astrologer ruminated for a moment, and a subtle gleam shone from his eye under his bushy eyebrows.

"Thou hast heard, no doubt, O king," said he, "of the palace and garden of Irem, whereof mention is made in that chapter of the Koran entitled 'the dawn of day.'"

"I have heard of that garden—marvelous things are related of it by the pilgrims who visit Mecca, but I have

thought them wild fables, such as those are prone to tell who visit remote regions.”

“Listen, O king, and thou shalt know the mystery of that garden. In my younger days I was in Arabia the Happy, tending my father’s camels. One of them strayed away from the rest and was lost. I searched for it for several days about the deserts of Aden, until, wearied and faint, I laid myself down and slept under a palm tree by the side of a scanty well. When I awoke, I found myself at the gate of a city. I entered and beheld noble streets and squares and market places, but all were silent and without an inhabitant. I wandered on until I came to a sumptuous palace, with a garden adorned with fountains and fish-ponds; and groves and flowers; and orchards laden with delicious fruit; but still no one was to be seen. Upon which, appalled at this loneliness, I hastened to depart, and, after issuing forth at the gate of the city, I turned to look upon the place, but it was no longer to be seen, nothing but the silent desert extended before my eyes.

“In the neighborhood I met with an aged dervise, learned in the traditions and secrets of the land, and related to him what had befallen me. ‘This,’ said he, ‘is the far famed garden of Irem, one of the wonders of the desert. It only appears at times to some wanderer like thyself, gladdening him with the sight of towers and palaces, and garden walls overhung with richly laden fruit trees, and then vanishes, leaving nothing but a lonely desert.—And this is the story of it: In old times, when this country was inhabited by the Addiles, King Sheddad, the son of Ad, the great-grandson of Noah, founded here a splendid city. When it was finished, and he saw its grandeur, his heart was puffed up with pride and arrogance, and he determined to build a royal palace, with gardens that should rival all that was related in the Koran of the celestial paradise. But the curse of heaven fell upon him for his presumption. He and his subjects were swept from the earth, and his splendid city, and palace, and garden, were laid under a perpetual spell, that hides

them from the human sight, excepting that they are seen at intervals; by way of keeping his sin in perpetual remembrance.'

"This story, O king, and the wonders I had seen, ever dwell in my mind, and, in after years, when I had been in Egypt and made myself master of all kinds of magic spells, I determined to return and visit the garden of Irem. I did so, and found it revealed to my instructed sight. I took possession of the palace of Sheddad, and passed several days in his mock paradise. The genii who watch over the place were obedient to my magic power, and revealed to me the spells by which the whole garden had been, as it were, conjured into existence, and by which it was rendered invisible. Such spells, O king, are within the scope of my art. What sayest thou? Wouldst thou have a palace and garden like those of Irem, filled with all manner of delights, but hidden from the eyes of mortals?"

"O wise son of Abu Ayub," exclaimed Aben Hazub, trembling with eagerness, "contrive me such a paradise, and ask any reward, even to the half of my kingdom."

"Alas," replied the other, "thou knowest I am an old man and a philosopher, and easily satisfied; all the reward I ask is the first beast of burden, with its load, that shall enter the magic portal of the palace."

The monarch gladly agreed to so moderate a stipulation and the astrologer began his work. On the summit of the hill immediately above his subterranean hermitage he caused a great gateway or barbican to be erected; opening through the center of a strong tower. There was an outer vestibule or porch with a lofty arch, and within it a portal secured by massive gates. On the key-stone of the portal the astrologer, with his own hand, wrought the figure of a huge key, and on the key-stone of the outer arch of the vestibule, which was loftier than that of the portal, he carved a gigantic hand. These were potent talismans, over which he repeated many sentences in an unknown tongue.

When this gateway was finished, he shut himself up for

two days in his astrological hall, engaged in secret incantations: on the third he ascended the hill and passed the whole day on its summit. At a late hour of the night he came down and presented himself before Aben Habuz. "At length, O king," said he, "my labor is accomplished. On the summit of the hill stands one of the most delectable palaces that ever the head of man devised or the heart of man desired. It contains sumptuous halls and galleries, delicious gardens, cool fountains and fragrant baths; in a word, the whole mountain is converted into a paradise. Like the garden of Irem, it is protected by a mighty charm, which hides it from the view and search of mortals, excepting such as possess the secret of its talismans."

"Enough," cried Aben Habuz, joyfully; "to-morrow morning, bright and early, we will ascend and take possession." The happy monarch scarcely slept that night. Scarcely had the rays of the sun begun to play about the snowy summit of the Sierra Nevada, when he mounted his steed, and, accompanied only by a few chosen attendants, ascended a steep and narrow road leading up the hill. Beside him, on a white palfrey, rode the Gothic princess, her dress sparkling with jewels, while round her neck was suspended her silver lyre. The astrologer walked on the other side of the king, assisting his steps with his hieroglyphic staff, for he never mounted steed of any kind.

Aben Habuz looked to see the towers of the promised palace brightening above him and the embowered terraces of its gardens stretching along the heights, but as yet nothing of the kind was to be descried. "That is the mystery and safeguard of the place," said the astrologer, "nothing can be discerned until you have passed the spell-bound gateway and been put in possession of the place."

As they approached the gateway, the astrologer paused and pointed out to the king the mystic hand and key carved upon the portal and the arch. "These," said he, "are the talismans which guard the entrance to this paradise. Until yonder hand shall reach down and seize that key, neither

mortal power nor magic artifice can prevail against the lord of this mountain."

While Aben Habuz was gazing with open mouth and silent wonder at these mystic talismans, the palfrey of the princess proceeded on and bore her in at the portal, to the very center of the barbican.

"Behold," cried the astrologer, "my promised reward!—the first animal with its burden that should enter the magic gateway."

Aben Habuz smiled at what he considered a pleasantry of the ancient man; but when he found him to be in earnest, his gray beard trembled with indignation.

"Son of Abu Ayub," said he, sternly, "what equivocation is this? Thou knowest the meaning of my promise, the first beast of burden, with its load, that should enter this portal. Take the strongest mule in my stables, load it with the most precious things of my treasury, and it is thine; but dare not to raise thy thoughts to her, who is the delight of my heart."

"What need I of wealth," cried the astrologer, scornfully; "have I not the book of knowledge of Solomon the Wise, and through it the command of the secret treasures of the earth? The princess is mine by right; thy royal word is pledged; I claim her as my own."

The princess sat upon her palfrey, in the pride of youth and beauty, and a light smile of scorn curled her rosy lip at this dispute between two gray beards for her charms. The wrath of the monarch got the better of his discretion. "Base son of the desert," cried he, "thou mayest be master of many arts, but know me for thy master—and presume not to juggle with thy king."

"My master!" echoed the astrologer, "my king! The monarch of a mole-hill to claim sway over him who possesses the talismans of Solomon! Farewell, Aben Habuz; reign over thy petty kingdom, and revel in thy paradise of fools—for me, I will laugh at thee in my philosophic retirement."

So saying, he seized the bridle of the palfrey, smote the

earth with his staff, and sank with the Gothic princess through the center of the barbican. The earth closed over them, and no trace remained of the opening by which they had descended. Aben Habuz was struck dumb for a time with astonishment. Recovering himself he ordered a thousand workmen to dig with pickax and spade into the ground where the astrologer had disappeared. They digged and digged, but in vain; the flinty bosom of the hill resisted their implements; or if they did penetrate a little way, the earth filled in again as fast as they threw it out. Aben Habuz sought the mouth of the cavern at the foot of the hill, leading to the subterranean palace of the astrologer, but it was nowhere to be found: where once had been an entrance was now a solid surface of primeval rock. With the disappearance of Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ayub ceased the benefit of his talismans. The bronze horseman remained fixed with his face turned toward the hill, and his spear pointed to the spot where the astrologer had descended, as if there still lurked the deadliest foe of Aben Habuz. From time to time the sound of music and the tones of a female voice could be faintly heard from the bosom of the hill, and a peasant one day brought word to the king that in the preceding night he had found a fissure in the rock, by which he had crept in until he looked down into a subterranean hall, in which sat the astrologer on a magnificent divan, slumbering and nodding to the silver lyre of the princess, which seemed to hold a magic sway over his senses.

Aben Habuz sought for the fissure in the rock, but it was again closed. He renewed the attempt to unearth his rival, but all in vain. The spell of the hand and key was too potent to be counteracted by human power. As to the summit of the mountain, the site of the promised palace and garden, it remained a naked waste: either the boasted Elysium was hidden from sight by enchantment, or was a mere fable of the astrologer. The world charitably supposed the latter, and some used to call the place "the king's folly," while others named it "the fool's Paradise."

To add to the chagrin of Aben Habuz, the neighbors, whom he had defied and taunted, and cut up at his leisure, while master of the talismanic horseman, finding him no longer protected by magic spell, made inroads into his territories from all sides, and the remainder of the life of the most pacific of monarchs was a tissue of turmoils.

At length, Aben Habuz died and was buried. Ages have since rolled away. The Alhambra has been built on the eventful mountain, and in some measure realizes the fabled delights of the garden of Irem. The spellbound gateway still exists, protected, no doubt, by the mystic hand and key, and now forms the gate of justice, the grand entrance to the fortress. Under that gateway, it is said, the old astrologer remains in his subterranean hall; nodding on his divan, lulled by the silver lyre of the princess.

The old invalid sentinels, who mount guard at the gate, hear the strains occasionally in the summer nights, and, yielding to their soporific power, doze quietly at their posts. Nay, so drowsy an influence pervades the place that even those who watch by day may generally be seen nodding on the stone benches of the barbican, or sleeping under the neighboring trees; so that it is, in fact, the drowsiest military post in all Christendom. All this, say the legends, will endure; from age to age the princess will remain captive to the astrologer, and the astrologer bound up in magic slumber by the princess, until the last day; unless the mystic hand shall grasp the fated key, and dispel the whole charm of this enchanted mountain.

LEGEND OF THE THREE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESSES

IN old times there reigned a Moorish king in Granada, whose name was Mohamed, to which his subjects added the appellation of el Haygari, or "the left-handed." Some say he was so called on account of his being really more expert with his sinister than his dexter hand; others, because he was prone to take everything by the wrong end; or, in other words, to mar wherever he meddled. Certain it is, either through misfortune or mismanagement, he was continually in trouble. Thrice was he driven from his throne, and on one occasion barely escaped to Africa with his life, in the disguise of a fisherman. Still he was as brave as he was blundering, and, though left-handed, wielded his scimitar to such purpose that he each time re-established himself upon his throne by dint of hard fighting. Instead, however, of learning wisdom from adversity, he hardened his neck, and stiffened his left-arm in willfulness. The evils of a public nature which he thus brought upon himself and his kingdom may be learned by those who will delve into the Arabian annals of Granada; the present legend deals but with his domestic policy.

As this Mohamed was one day riding forth, with a train of his courtiers, by the foot of the mountain of Elvira, he met a band of horsemen returning from a foray into the land of the Christians. They were conducting a long string of mules laden with spoil, and many captives of both sexes, among whom the monarch was struck with the appearance of a beautiful damsel richly attired, who sat weeping, on a low palfrey, and heeded not the consoling words of a duenna who rode beside her.

The monarch was struck with her beauty, and on inquir-



THE SPELL-BOUND GATEWAY.

Irving, Vol. Two, p. 106.

ing of the captain of the troop, found that she was the daughter of the alcaide of a frontier fortress that had been surprised and sacked in the course of the foray.

Mohamed claimed her as his royal share of the booty, and had her conveyed to his harem in the Alhambra. There everything was devised to soothe her melancholy, and the monarch, more and more enamored, sought to make her his queen.

The Spanish maid at first repulsed his addresses. He was an infidel—he was the open foe of her country—what was worse, he was stricken in years!

The monarch, finding his assiduities of no avail, determined to enlist in his favor the duenna who had been captured with the lady. She was an Andalusian by birth, whose Christian name is forgotten, being mentioned in Moorish legends by no other appellation than that of the discreet Cadiga—and discreet in truth she was, as her whole history makes evident. No sooner had the Moorish king held a little private conversation with her, than she saw at once the cogency of his reasoning, and undertook his cause with her young mistress.

“Go to, now!” cried she; “what is there in all this to weep and wail about?—Is it not better to be mistress of this beautiful palace, with all its gardens and fountains, than to be shut up within your father’s old frontier tower? As to this Mohamed being an infidel—what is that to the purpose? You marry him—not his religion. And if he is waxing a little old, the sooner will you be a widow and mistress of yourself. At any rate, you are in his power—and must either be a queen or a slave. When in the hands of a robber, it is better to sell one’s merchandise for a fair price than to have it taken by main force.”

The arguments of the discreet Cadiga prevailed. The Spanish lady dried her tears and became the spouse of Mohamed the left-handed. She even conformed in appearance to the faith of her royal husband, and her discreet duenna immediately became a zealous convert to the Moslem doc-

trines; it was then the latter received the Arabian name of Cadiga, and was permitted to remain in the confidential employ of her mistress.

In due process of time, the Moorish king was made the proud and happy father of three lovely daughters, all born at a birth. He could have wished they had been sons, but consoled himself with the idea that three daughters at a birth were pretty well for a man somewhat stricken in years and left-handed.

As usual with all Moslem monarchs, he summoned his astrologers on this happy event. They cast the nativities of the three princesses, and shook their heads. "Daughters, O king," said they, "are always precarious property; but these will most need your watchfulness when they arrive at a marriageable age.—At that time gather them under your wing, and trust them to no other guardianship."

Mohamed the left-handed was acknowledged by his courtiers to be a wise king, and was certainly so considered by himself. The prediction of the astrologers caused him but little disquiet, trusting to his ingenuity to guard his daughters and outwit the fates.

The threefold birth was the last matrimonial trophy of the monarch; his queen bore him no more children, and died within a few years, bequeathing her infant daughters to his love, and to the fidelity of the discreet Cadiga.

Many years had yet to elapse before the princesses would arrive at that period of danger, the marriageable age. "It is good, however, to be cautious in time," said the shrewd monarch; so he determined to have them reared in the royal castle of Salobreña. This was a sumptuous palace, incrustated, as it were, in a powerful Moorish fortress, on the summit of a hill that overlooks the Mediterranean sea.

It was a royal retreat, in which the Moslem monarchs shut up such of their relations as might endanger their safety; allowing them all kinds of luxuries and amusements, in the midst of which they passed their lives in voluptuous indolence.

Here the princesses remained, immured from the world, but surrounded by enjoyments; and attended by female slaves who anticipated their wishes. They had delightful gardens for their recreation, filled with the rarest fruits and flowers, with aromatic groves and perfumed baths. On three sides the castle looked down upon a rich valley, enameled with all kinds of culture, and bounded by the lofty Al-puxarra mountains; on the other side it overlooked the broad sunny sea.

In this delicious abode, in a propitious climate and under a cloudless sky, the three princesses grew up into wondrous beauty; but, though all reared alike, they gave early tokens of diversity of character. Their names were Zayda, Zorayda, and Zorahayda; and such was the order of seniority, for there had been precisely three minutes between their births.

Zayda, the eldest, was of an intrepid spirit, and took the lead of her sisters in everything, as she had done in entering first into the world. She was curious and inquisitive, and fond of getting at the bottom of things.

Zorayda had a great feeling for beauty, which was the reason, no doubt, of her delighting to regard her own image in a mirror or a fountain, and of her fondness for flowers and jewels, and other tasteful ornaments.

As to Zorahayda, the youngest, she was soft and timid, and extremely sensitive, with a vast deal of disposable tenderness, as was evident from her number of pet flowers, and pet birds, and pet animals, all of which she cherished with the fondest care. Her amusements, too, were of a gentle nature, and mixed up with musing and reverie. She would sit for hours in a balcony gazing on the sparkling stars of a summer night; or on the sea when lighted up by the moon, and at such times the song of a fisherman faintly heard from the beach, or the notes of an arrafia or Moorish flute from some gliding bark, sufficed to elevate her feelings into ecstasy. The least uproar of the elements, however, filled her with dismay, and a clap of thunder was enough to throw her into a swoon.

Years moved on serenely, and Cadiga, to whom the princesses were confided, was faithful to her trust and attended them with unremitting care.

The castle of Salobreña, as has been said, was built upon a hill on the sea coast. One of the exterior walls straggled down the profile of the hill, until it reached a jutting rock overhanging the sea, with a narrow sandy beach at its foot, laved by the rippling billows. A small watch-tower on this rock had been fitted up as a pavilion, with latticed windows to admit the sea breeze. Here the princesses used to pass the sultry hours of midday.

The curious Zayda was one day seated at one of the windows of the pavilion, as her sisters, reclined on ottomans, were taking the siesta, or noontide slumber. Her attention had been attracted to a galley, which came coasting along, with measured strokes of the oar. As it drew near, she observed that it was filled with armed men. The galley anchored at the foot of the tower: a number of Moorish soldiers landed on the narrow beach, conducting several Christian prisoners. The curious Zayda awakened her sisters, and all three peeped cautiously through the close jalousies of the lattice, which screened them from sight. Among the prisoners were three Spanish cavaliers, richly dressed. They were in the flower of youth, and of noble presence, and the lofty manner in which they carried themselves, though loaded with chains and surrounded with enemies, bespoke the grandeur of their souls. The princesses gazed with intense and breathless interest. Cooped up as they had been in this castle among female attendants, seeing nothing of the male sex but black slaves, or the rude fishermen of the seacoast, it is not to be wondered at that the appearance of three gallant cavaliers in the pride of youth and manly beauty should produce some commotion in their bosoms.

“Did ever nobler being tread the earth than that cavalier in crimson?” cried Zayda, the eldest of the sisters. “See how proudly he bears himself, as though all around him were his slaves!”

"But notice that one in green," exclaimed Zorayda; "what grace! what elegance! what spirit!"

The gentle Zorahayda said nothing, but she secretly gave preference to the cavalier in green.

The princesses remained gazing until the prisoners were out of sight; then heaving long-drawn sighs, they turned round, looked at each other for a moment, and sat down musing and pensive on their ottomans.

The discreet Cadiga found them in this situation; they related to her what they had seen, and even the withered heart of the duenna was warmed. "Poor youths!" exclaimed she, "I'll warrant their captivity makes many a fair and high-born lady's heart ache in their native land! Ah, my children, you have little idea of the life these cavaliers lead in their own country. Such pranking at tournaments! such devotion to the ladies! such courting and serenading!"

The curiosity of Zayda was fully aroused. She was insatiable in her inquiries, and drew from the duenna the most animated pictures of the scenes of her youthful days and native land. The beautiful Zorayda bridled up, and slyly regarded herself in a mirror, when the theme turned upon the charms of the Spanish ladies; while Zorahayda suppressed a struggling sigh at the mention of moonlight serenades.

Every day the curious Zayda renewed her inquiries; and every day the sage duenna repeated her stories, which were listened to with unmoved interest, though frequent sighs, by her gentle auditors. The discreet old woman at length awakened to the mischief she might be doing. She had been accustomed to think of the princesses only as children, but they had imperceptibly ripened beneath her eye, and now bloomed before her three lovely damsels of the marriageable age.—It is time, thought the duenna, to give notice to the king.

Mohamed the left-handed was seated one morning on a divan in one of the court halls of the Alhambra, when a noble arrived from the fortress of Salobreña, with a message from

the sage Cadiga, congratulating him on the anniversary of his daughters' birthday. The slave at the same time presented a delicate little basket decorated with flowers, within which, on a couch of vine and fig leaves, lay a peach, an apricot, and a nectarine, with their bloom and down and dewy sweetness upon them, and all in the early stage of tempting ripeness. The monarch was versed in the Oriental language of fruits and flowers, and readily divined the meaning of this emblematical offering.

"So!" said he, "the critical period pointed out by the astrologers is arrived.—My daughters are at a marriageable age. What is to be done? They are shut up from the eyes of men—they are under the eye of the discreet Cadiga—all very good—but still they are not under my own eye, as was prescribed by the astrologers.—'I must gather them under my wing, and trust to no other guardianship.' "

So saying, he ordered that a tower of the Alhambra should be prepared for their reception, and departed at the head of his guards for the fortress of Salobrena, to conduct them home in person.

About three years had elapsed since Mohamed had beheld his daughters, and he could scarcely credit his eyes at the wonderful change which that small space of time had made in their appearance. During the interval they had passed that wondrous boundary line in female life, which separates the crude, unformed and thoughtless girl from the blooming, blushing, meditative woman. It is like passing from the flat, bleak, uninteresting plains of La Mancha to the voluptuous valleys and swelling hills of Andalusia.

Zayda was tall and finely formed, with a lofty demeanor and a penetrating eye. She entered with a stately and decided step, and made a profound reverence to Mohamed, treating him more as her sovereign than her father. Zorayda was of the middle height, with an alluring look and swimming gait, and a sparkling beauty heightened by the assistance of the toilet. She approached her father with a smile, kissed his hand, and saluted him with several stanzas

from a popular Arabian poet, with which the monarch was delighted. Zorahayda was shy and timid; smaller than her sisters, and with a beauty of that tender, beseeching kind which looks for fondness and protection. She was little fitted to command like her elder sister, or to dazzle like the second; but was rather formed to creep to the bosom of manly affection, to nestle within it, and be content. She drew near her father with a timid and almost faltering step, and would have taken his hand to kiss, but on looking up into his face, and seeing it beaming with a paternal smile, the tenderness of her nature broke forth, and she threw herself upon his neck.

Mohamed the left-handed surveyed his blooming daughters with mingled pride and perplexity; for while he exulted in their charms, he bethought himself of the prediction of the astrologers. "Three daughters! — three daughters!" muttered he repeatedly to himself, "and all of a marriageable age! Here's tempting hesperian fruit that requires a dragon watch!"

He prepared for his return to Granada, by sending heralds before him, commanding every one to keep out of the road by which he was to pass, and that all doors and windows should be closed at the approach of the princesses. This done, he set forth escorted by a troop of black horsemen of hideous aspect, and clad in shining armor.

The princesses rode beside the king, closely veiled, on beautiful white palfreys, with velvet caparisons embroidered with gold, and sweeping the ground; the bits and stirrups were of gold, and the silken bridles adorned with pearls and precious stones. The palfreys were covered with little silver bells that made the most musical tinkling as they ambled gently along. Woe to the unlucky wight, however, who lingered in the way when he heard the tinkling of these bells — the guards were ordered to cut him down without mercy.

The cavalcade was drawing near to Granada, when it overtook, on the banks of the river Xenil, a small body of Moorish soldiers, with a convoy of prisoners. It was too

late for the soldiers to get out of the way, so they threw themselves on their faces on the earth, ordering their captives to do the like. Among the prisoners were the three identical cavaliers whom the princesses had seen from the pavilion. They either did not understand, or were too haughty to obey the order, and remained standing and gazing upon the cavalcade as it approached.

The ire of the monarch was kindled at this flagrant defiance of his orders, and he determined to punish it with his own hand. Drawing his scimiter and pressing forward, he was about to deal a left-handed blow that would have been fatal to at least one of the gazers, when the princesses crowded round him, and implored mercy for the prisoners; even the timid Zorahayda forgot her shyness and became eloquent in their behalf. Mohamed paused, with uplifted scimiter, when the captain of the guard threw himself at his feet. "Let not your majesty," said he, "do a deed that may cause great scandal throughout the kingdom. These are three brave and noble Spanish knights who have been taken in battle, fighting like lions; they are of high birth, and may bring great ransoms."

"Enough," said the king; "I will spare their lives, but punish their audacity—let them be taken to the Vermilion towers and put to hard labor."

Mohamed was making one of his usual left-handed blunders. In the tumult and agitation of this blustering scene, the veils of the three princesses had been thrown back, and the radiance of their beauty revealed; and in prolonging the parley, the king had given that beauty time to have its full effect. In those days, people fell in love much more suddenly than at present, as all ancient stories make manifest; it is not a matter of wonder, therefore, that the hearts of the three cavaliers were completely captivated; especially as gratitude was added to their admiration: it is a little singular, however, though no less certain, that each of them was enraptured with a several beauty. As to the princesses, they were more than ever struck with the noble demeanor

of the captives, and cherished in their hearts all that they had heard of their valor and noble lineage.

The cavalcade resumed its march; the three princesses rode pensively along on their tinkling palfreys, now and then stealing a glance behind in search of the Christian captives, and the latter were conducted to their allotted prison in the Vermilion towers.

The residence provided for the princesses was one of the most dainty that fancy could devise. It was in a tower somewhat apart from the main palace of the Alhambra, though connected with it by the main wall that encircled the whole summit of the hill. On one side it looked into the interior of the fortress, and had at its foot a small garden filled with the rarest flowers. On the other side it overlooked a deep embowered ravine that separated the grounds of the Alhambra from those of the Generaliffe. The interior of the tower was divided into small fairy apartments, beautifully ornamented in the light Arabian style, surrounding a lofty hall, the vaulted roof of which rose almost to the summit of the tower. The walls and ceiling of the hall were adorned with arabesques and fretwork sparkling with gold, and with brilliant penciling. In the center of the marble pavement was an alabaster fountain, set round with aromatic shrubs and flowers, and throwing up a jet of water that cooled the whole edifice and had a lulling sound. Round the hall were suspended cages of gold and silver wire, containing singing birds of the finest plumage or sweetest note.

The princesses having been represented as always cheerful when in the castle of Salobrena, the king had expected to see them enraptured with the Alhambra. To his surprise, however, they began to pine, and grew green and melancholy, and dissatisfied with everything around them. The flowers yielded them no fragrance; the song of the nightingale disturbed their night's rest, and they were out of all patience with the alabaster fountain, with its eternal drop, drop, and splash, splash, from morning till night, and from night till morning.

The king, who was somewhat of a testy, tyrannical old man, took this at first in high dudgeon; but he reflected that his daughters had arrived at an age when the female mind expands and its desires augment. "They are no longer children," said he to himself; "they are women grown, and require suitable objects to interest them." He put in requisition, therefore, all the dressmakers, and the jewelers, and the artificers in gold and silver throughout the Zacatin of Granada, and the princesses were overwhelmed with robes of silk, and of tissue and of brocade, and cachemire shawls, and necklaces of pearls, and diamonds, and rings, and bracelets, and anklets, and all manner of precious things.

All, however, was of no avail. The princesses continued pale and languid in the midst of their finery, and looked like three blighted rose buds, drooping from one stalk. The king was at his wit's end. He had in general a laudable confidence in his own judgment, and never took advice. "The whims and caprices of three marriageable damsels, however, are sufficient," said he, "to puzzle the shrewdest head."—So, for once in his life, he called in the aid of counsel.

The person to whom he applied was the experienced duenna.

"Cadiga," said the king, "I know you to be one of the most discreet women in the whole world, as well as one of the most trustworthy; for these reasons, I have always continued you about the persons of my daughters. Fathers cannot be too wary in whom they repose such confidence. I now wish you to find out the secret malady that is preying upon the princesses, and to devise some means of restoring them to health and cheerfulness."

Cadiga promised implicit obedience. In fact, she knew more of the malady of the princesses than they did themselves. Shutting herself up with them, however, she endeavored to insinuate herself into their confidence.

"My dear children, what is the reason you are so dismal and downcast, in so beautiful a place, where you have everything that heart can wish?"

The princesses looked vacantly round the apartment, and sighed.

"What more, then, would you have? Shall I get you the wonderful parrot that talks all languages, and is the delight of Granada?"

"Odious!" exclaimed the princess Zayda. "A horrid screaming bird that chatters words without ideas! One must be without brains to tolerate such a pest."

"Shall I send for a monkey from the rock of Gibraltar, to divert you with its antics?"

"A monkey! faugh!" cried Zorayda, "the detestable mimic of man. I hate the nauseous animal."

"What say you to the famous black singer, Casem, from the royal harem in Morocco. They say he has a voice as fine as a woman's."

"I am terrified at the sight of these black slaves," said the delicate Zorahayda; "besides, I have lost all relish for music."

"Ah, my child, you would not say so," replied the old woman, slyly, "had you heard the music I heard last evening, from the three Spanish cavaliers whom we met on our journey.—But bless me, children! what is the matter that you blush so, and are in such a flutter?"

"Nothing, nothing, good mother, pray proceed."

"Well—as I was passing by the Vermilion towers, last evening, I saw the three cavaliers resting after their day's labor. One was playing on the guitar so gracefully, and the others sang by turns—and they did it in such style that the very guards seemed like statues or men enchanted. Allah forgive me, I could not help being moved at hearing the songs of my native country.—And then to see three such noble and handsome youths in chains and slavery."

Here the kind-hearted old woman could not restrain her tears.

"Perhaps, mother, you could manage to procure us a sight of these cavaliers," said Zayda.

"I think," said Zorayda, "a little music would be quite reviving."

The timid Zorahayda said nothing, but threw her arms round the neck of Cadiga.

"Mercy on me!" exclaimed the discreet old woman; "what are you talking of, my children? Your father would be the death of us all, if he heard of such a thing. To be sure, these cavaliers are evidently well-bred and high-minded youths—but what of that! they are the enemies of our faith, and you must not even think of them, but with abhorrence."

There is an admirable intrepidity in the female will, particularly about the marriageable age, which is not to be deterred by dangers and prohibitions. The princesses hung round their old duenna, and coaxed and entreated, and declared that a refusal would break their hearts. What could she do? She was certainly the most discreet old woman in the whole world, and one of the most faithful servants to the king—but was she to see three beautiful princesses break their hearts for the mere tinkling of a guitar? Besides, though she had been so long among the Moors and changed her faith, in imitation of her mistress, like a trusty follower, yet she was a Spaniard born, and had the lingerings of Christianity in her heart. So she set about to contrive how the wishes of the princesses might be gratified.

The Christian captives confined in the Vermilion towers were under the charge of a big-whiskered, broad-shouldered renegado called Hussein Baba, who was reported to have a most itching palm. She went to him, privately, and slipping a broad piece of gold into his hand, "Hussein Baba," said she, "my mistresses, the three princesses, who are shut up in the tower, and in sad want of amusement, have heard of the musical talents of the three Spanish cavaliers, and are desirous of hearing a specimen of their skill. I am sure you are too kind-hearted to refuse them so innocent a gratification."

"What, and to have my head set grinning over the gate of my own tower—for that would be the reward if the king should discover it."

"No danger of anything of the kind; the affair may be

managed so that the whim of the princesses may be gratified and their father be never the wiser. You know the deep ravine outside of the walls that passes immediately below the tower. Put the three Christians to work there, and at the intervals of their labor let them play and sing, as if for their own recreation. In this way the princesses will be able to hear them from the windows of the tower, and you may be sure of their paying well for your compliance."

As the good old woman concluded her harangue, she kindly pressed the rough hand of the renegado, and left within it another piece of gold.

Her eloquence was irresistible. The very next day the three cavaliers were put to work in the ravine. During the noontide heat when their fellow laborers were sleeping in the shade and the guard nodded drowsily at his post, they seated themselves among the herbage at the foot of the tower and sang a Spanish roundelay to the accompaniment of the guitar.

The glen was deep, the tower was high, but their voices rose distinctly in the stillness of the summer noon. The princesses listened from their balcony; they had been taught the Spanish language by their duenna, and were moved by the tenderness of the song.

The discreet Cadiga, on the contrary, was terribly shocked. "Allah preserve us," cried she, "they are singing a love ditty addressed to yourselves—did ever mortal hear of such audacity? I will run to the slave master and have them soundly bastinadoed."

"What, bastinado such gallant cavaliers, and for singing so charmingly!" The three beautiful princesses were filled with horror at the idea. With all her virtuous indignation, the good old woman was of a placable nature and easily appeased. Besides, the music seemed to have a beneficial effect upon her young mistresses. A rosy bloom had already come to their cheeks and their eyes began to sparkle. She made no further objection, therefore, to the amorous ditty of the cavaliers.

When it was finished, the princesses remained silent for a time; at length Zorayda took up a lute and with a sweet, though faint and trembling voice warbled a little Arabian air, the burden of which was, "The rose is concealed among her leaves, but she listens with delight to the song of the nightingale."

From this time forward the cavaliers worked almost daily in the ravine. The considerate Hussein Baba became more and more indulgent, and daily more prone to sleep at his post. For some time a vague intercourse was kept up by popular songs and romances; which in some measure responded to each other, and breathed the feelings of the parties. By degrees the princesses showed themselves at the balcony, when they could do so without being perceived by the guards. They conversed with the cavaliers also by means of flowers, with the symbolical language of which they were mutually acquainted: the difficulties of their intercourse added to its charms, and strengthened the passion they had so singularly conceived; for love delights to struggle with difficulties and thrives the most hardily on the scantiest soil.

The change effected in the looks and spirits of the princesses by this secret intercourse surprised and gratified the left-handed king; but no one was more elated than the discreet Cadiga, who considered it all owing to her able management.

At length there was an interruption in this telegraphic correspondence, for several days the cavaliers ceased to make their appearance in the glen. The three beautiful princesses looked out from the tower in vain.—In vain they stretched their swan-like necks from the balcony; in vain they sang like captive nightingales in their cage; nothing was to be seen of their Christian lovers, not a note responded from the groves. The discreet Cadiga sallied forth in quest of intelligence, and soon returned with a face full of trouble. "Ah, my children!" cried she, "I saw what all this would come to, but you would have your way; you may now hang up your lutes on the willows. The Spanish cavaliers are ran-

somed by their families; they are down in Granada and preparing to return to their native country."

The three beautiful princesses were in despair at the tidings. The fair Zayda was indignant at the slight put upon them, in being thus deserted without a parting word. Zorayda wrung her hands and cried, and looked in the glass, and wiped away her tears and cried afresh. The gentle Zorahayda leaned over the balcony and wept in silence, and her tears fell drop by drop among the flowers of the bank where the faithless cavaliers had so often been seated.

The discreet Cadiga did all in her power to soothe their sorrow. "Take comfort, my children," said she; "this is nothing when you are used to it. This is the way of the world. Ah, when you are as old as I am, you will know how to value these men. I'll warrant these cavaliers have their loves among the Spanish beauties of Cordova and Seville, and will soon be serenading under their balconies, and thinking no more of the Moorish beauties in the Alhambra.—Take comfort, therefore, my children, and drive them from your hearts."

The comforting words of the discreet Cadiga only redoubled the distress of the princesses, and for two days they continued inconsolable. On the morning of the third, the good old woman entered their apartment all ruffling with indignation.

"Who would have believed such insolence in mortal man?" exclaimed she, as soon as she could find words to express herself; "but I am rightly served for having connived at this deception of your worthy father—never talk more to me of your Spanish cavaliers."

"Why, what has happened, good Cadiga?" exclaimed the princesses, in breathless anxiety.

"What has happened? treason has happened!—or what is almost as bad, treason has been proposed—and to me—the faithfulest of subjects—the trustiest of duennas—yes, my children—the Spanish cavaliers have dared to tamper with

me; that I should persuade you to fly with them to Cordova and become their wives."

Here the excellent old woman covered her face with her hands and gave way to a violent burst of grief and indignation.

The three beautiful princesses turned pale and red, and trembled, and looked down; and cast shy looks at each other, but said nothing; meantime, the old woman sat rocking backward and forward in violent agitation, and now and then breaking out into exclamations—"That ever I should live to be so insulted—I, the faithfulest of servants!"

At length the eldest princess, who had most spirit, and always took the lead, approached her, and laying her hand upon her shoulder—"Well, mother," said she, "supposing we were willing to fly with these Christian cavaliers—is such a thing possible?"

The good old woman paused suddenly in her grief, and looking up—"Possible!" echoed she, "to be sure it is possible. Have not the cavaliers already bribed Hussein Baba, the renegado captain of the guard, and arranged the whole plan?—But then to think of deceiving your father—your father, who has placed such confidence in me?"

Here the worthy old woman gave way to a fresh burst of grief, and began again to rock backward and forward and to wring her hands.

"But our father has never placed any confidence in us," said the eldest princess; "but has trusted to bolts and bars and treated us as captives."

"Why, that is true enough," replied the old woman, again pausing in her grief—"He has indeed treated you most unreasonably. Keeping you shut up here to waste your bloom in a moping old tower, like roses left to wither in a flower jar. But then to fly from your native land."

"And is not the land we fly to the native land of our mother; where we shall live in freedom?—and shall we not each have a youthful husband in exchange for a severe old father?"

"Why, that again is all very true—and your father, I must confess, is rather tyrannical.—But what then"—relapsing into her grief—"would you leave me behind to bear the brunt of his vengeance?"

"By no means, my good Cadiga. Cannot you fly with us?"

"Very true, my child, and to tell the truth, when I talked the matter over with Hussein Baba, he promised to take care of me if I would accompany you in your flight: but then, bethink you, my children; are you willing to renounce the faith of your father?"

"The Christian faith was the original faith of our mother," said the eldest princess; "I am ready to embrace it; and so I am sure are my sisters."

"Right again!" exclaimed the old woman, brightening up. "It was the original faith of your mother; and bitterly did she lament, on her death-bed, that she had renounced it. I promised her then to take care of your souls, and I am rejoiced to see that they are now in a fair way to be saved. Yes, my children; I too was born a Christian—and have always been a Christian in my heart; and am resolved to return to the faith. I have talked on the subject with Hussein Baba, who is a Spaniard by birth, and comes from a place not far from my native town. He is equally anxious to see his own country and to be reconciled to the church, and the cavaliers have promised that if we are disposed to become man and wife on returning to our native land, they will provide for us handsomely."

In a word, it appeared that this extremely discreet and provident old woman had consulted with the cavaliers and the renegado, and had concerted the whole plan of escape. The eldest princess immediately assented to it, and her example as usual determined the conduct of her sisters. It is true, the youngest hesitated, for she was gentle and timid of soul, and there was a struggle in her bosom between filial feeling and youthful passion. The latter, however, as usual, gained the victory, and with silent tears and stifled sighs she prepared herself for flight.

The rugged hill on which the Alhambra is built was in old times perforated with subterranean passages, cut through the rock, and leading from the fortress to various parts of the city, and to distant sally-ports on the banks of the Darro and the Xenil. They had been constructed at different times by the Moorish kings, as means of escape from sudden insurrection, or of secretly issuing forth on private enterprises. Many of them are now entirely lost, while others remain, partly choked up with rubbish and partly walled up—monuments of the jealous precautions and warlike stratagems of the Moorish government. By one of these passages Hussein Baba had undertaken to conduct the princesses to a sally-port beyond the walls of the city, where the cavaliers were to be ready with fleet steeds to bear them all over the borders.

The appointed night arrived. The tower of the princesses had been locked up as usual and the Alhambra was buried in deep sleep. Toward midnight the discreet Cadiga listened from a balcony of a window that looked into the garden. Hussein Baba, the renegado, was already below, and gave the appointed signal. The duenna fastened the end of a ladder of ropes to the balcony, lowered it into the garden and descended. The two elder princesses followed her with beating hearts; but when it came to the turn of the youngest princess, Zorahayda, she hesitated and trembled. Several times she ventured a delicate little foot upon the ladder, and as often drew it back; while her poor little heart fluttered more and more the longer she delayed. She cast a wistful look back into the silken chamber; she had lived in it, to be sure, like a bird in a cage, but within it she was secure—who could tell what dangers might beset her should she flutter forth into the wide world? Now she bethought her of her gallant Christian lover, and her little foot was instantly upon the ladder, and anon she thought of her father and shrunk back. But fruitless is the attempt to describe the conflict in the bosom of one so young, and tender, and loving, but so timid and so ignorant of the world. In vain her sisters implored, the duenna scolded, and the renegado

blasphemed beneath the balcony. The gentle little Moorish maid stood doubting and wavering on the verge of elopement; tempted by the sweetness of the sin, but terrified at its perils.

Every moment increased the danger of discovery. A distant tramp was heard.—“The patrols are walking the rounds,” cried the renegado; “if we linger longer we perish—princess, descend instantly, or we leave you.”

Zorahayda was for a moment in fearful agitation, then loosening the ladder of ropes, with desperate resolution she flung it from the balcony.

“It is decided,” cried she, “flight is now out of my power!—Allah guide and bless ye, my dear sisters!”

The two elder princesses were shocked at the thoughts of leaving her behind, and would fain have lingered, but the patrol was advancing; the renegado was furious, and they were hurried away to the subterraneous passage. They groped their way through a fearful labyrinth cut through the heart of the mountain, and succeeded in reaching, undiscovered, an iron gate that opened outside of the walls. The Spanish cavaliers were waiting to receive them, disguised as Moorish soldiers of the guard commanded by the renegado.

The lover of Zorahayda was frantic when he learned that she had refused to leave the tower; but there was no time to waste in lamentations. The two princesses were placed behind their lovers; the discreet Cadiga mounted behind the renegado, and all set off at a round pace in the direction of the pass of Lope, which leads through the mountains toward Cordova.

They had not proceeded far when they heard the noise of drums and trumpets from the battlements of the Alhambra. “Our flight is discovered,” said the renegado.—“We have fleet steeds, the night is dark, and we may distance all pursuit,” replied the cavaliers.

They put spurs to their horses and scoured across the Vega. They attained to the foot of the mountain of Elvira, which stretches like a promontory into the plain. The rene-

gado paused and listened. "As yet," said he, "there is no one on our traces, we shall make good our escape to the mountains." While he spoke a ball of fire sprang up in a light blaze on the top of the watch-tower of the Alhambra.

"Confusion!" cried the renegado, "that fire will put all the guards of the passes on the alert. Away, away, spur like mad; there is no time to be lost."

Away they dashed—the clattering of their horses' hoofs echoed from rock to rock as they swept along the road that skirts the rocky mountain of Elvira. As they galloped on, they beheld that the ball of fire of the Alhambra was answered in every direction; light after light blazed on the atalayas or watch-towers of the mountains.

"Forward! forward!" cried the renegado, with many an oath—"to the bridge!—to the bridge! before the alarm has reached there."

They doubled the promontory of the mountain, and arrived in sight of the famous Puente del Pinos, that crosses a rushing stream often dyed with Christian and Moslem blood. To their confusion the tower on the bridge blazed with lights and glittered with armed men. The renegado pulled up his steed, rose in his stirrups, and looked about him for a moment, then beckoning to the cavaliers he struck off from the road, skirted the river for some distance and dashed into its waters. The cavaliers called upon the princesses to cling to them, and did the same. They were borne for some distance down the rapid current, the surges roared round them, but the beautiful princesses clung to their Christian knights and never uttered a complaint. The cavaliers attained the opposite bank in safety, and were conducted by the renegado, by rude and unfrequented paths and wild barrancos, through the heart of the mountains, so as to avoid all the regular passes. In a word, they succeeded in reaching the ancient city of Cordova; when their restoration to their country and friends was celebrated with great rejoicings, for they were of the noblest families. The beautiful princesses were forthwith received into the bosom of the church, and after being

in all due form made regular Christians, were rendered happy lovers.

In our hurry to make good the escape of the princesses across the river and up the mountains, we forgot to mention the fate of the discreet Cadiga. She had clung like a cat to Hussein Baba, in the scamper across the Vega, screaming at every bound and drawing many an oath from the whiskered renegado; but when he prepared to plunge his steed into the river her terror knew no bounds.

"Grasp me not so tightly," cried Hussein Baba; "hold on by my belt and fear nothing."

She held firmly with both hands by the leathern belt that girded the broad-backed renegado; but when he halted with the cavaliers to take breath on the mountain summit, the duenna was no longer to be seen.

"What has become of Cadiga?" cried the princesses in alarm.

"I know not," replied the renegado. "My belt came loose in the midst of the river, and Cadiga was swept with it down the stream. The will of Allah be done!—but it was an embroidered belt and of great price!"

There was no time to waste in idle regrets, yet bitterly did the princesses bewail the loss of their faithful and discreet counselor. That excellent old woman, however, did not lose more than half of her nine lives in the stream.—A fisherman who was drawing his nets some distance down the stream brought her to land and was not a little astonished at his miraculous draught. What further became of the discreet Cadiga, the legend does not mention.—Certain it is, that she evinced her discretion in never venturing within the reach of Mohamed the left-handed.

Almost as little is known of the conduct of that sagacious monarch, when he discovered the escape of his daughters and the deceit practiced upon him by the most faithful of servants. It was the only instance in which he had called in the aid of counsel, and he was never afterward known to be guilty of a similar weakness. He took good care, how-

ever, to guard his remaining daughter, who had no disposition to elope. It is thought, indeed, that she secretly repented having remained behind. Now and then she was seen leaning on the battlements of the tower and looking mournfully toward the mountains in the direction of Cordova; and sometimes the notes of her lute were heard accompanying plaintive ditties, in which she was said to lament the loss of her sisters and her lover, and to bewail her solitary life. She died young, and, according to popular rumor, was buried in a vault beneath the tower, and her untimely fate has given rise to more than one traditionary fable.

LOCAL TRADITIONS

THE common people of Spain have an Oriental passion for story-telling and are fond of the marvelous. They will gather round the doors of their cottages on summer evenings, or in the great cavernous chimney corners of their ventas in the winter, and listen with insatiable delight to miraculous legends of saints, perilous adventures of travelers, and daring exploits of robbers and contrabandistas. The wild and solitary nature of a great part of Spain; the imperfect state of knowledge; the scantiness of general topics of conversation, and the romantic, adventurous life that every one leads in a land where traveling is yet in its primitive state, all contribute to cherish this love of oral narration, and to produce a strong expression of the extravagant and wonderful. There is no theme, however, more prevalent or popular than that of treasures buried by the Moors. It pervades the whole country. In traversing the wild Sierras, the scenes of ancient prey and exploit, you cannot see a Moorish atalaya or watch-tower perched among the cliffs, or beetling above its rock-built village, but your muleteer, on being closely questioned, will suspend the smoking of his cigarillo to tell

some tale of Moslem gold buried beneath its foundations; nor is there a ruined alcazar in a city, but has its golden tradition, handed down, from generation to generation, among the poor people of the neighborhood.

These, like most popular fictions, have had some groundwork in fact. During the wars between Moor and Christian, which distracted the country for centuries, towns and castles were liable frequently and suddenly to change owners; and the inhabitants, during sieges and assaults, were fain to bury their money and jewels in the earth, or hide them in vaults and wells, as is often done at the present day in the despotic and belligerent countries of the East. At the time of the expulsion of the Moors, also, many of them concealed their most precious effects, hoping that their exile would be but temporary, and that they would be enabled to return and retrieve their treasures at some future day. It is certain that, from time to time, hoards of gold and silver coin have been accidentally dug up, after a lapse of centuries, from among the ruins of Moorish fortresses and habitations, and it requires but a few facts of the kind to give birth to a thousand fictions.

The stories thus originating have generally something of an Oriental tinge, and are marked with that mixture of the Arabic and Gothic which seems to me to characterize everything in Spain; and especially in its southern provinces. The hidden wealth is always laid under magic spell, and secured by charm and talisman. Sometimes it is guarded by uncouth monsters or fiery dragons; sometimes by enchanted Moors, who sit by it in armor, with drawn swords, but motionless as statues, maintaining a sleepless watch for ages.

The Alhambra, of course, from the peculiar circumstances of its history, is a stronghold for popular fictions of the kind, and curious relics, dug up from time to time, have contributed to strengthen them. At one time, an earthen vessel was found, containing Moorish coins and the skeleton of a cock, which, according to the opinion of shrewd inspectors, must have been buried alive. At another time, a vessel was

dug up, containing a great scarabæus, or beetle, of baked clay, covered with Arabic inscriptions, which was pronounced a prodigious amulet of occult virtues. In this way the wits of the ragged brood who inhabit the Alhambra have been set wool gathering, until there is not a hall, or tower, or vault of the old fortress that has not been made the scene of some marvelous tradition.

I have already given brief notices of some related to me by the authentic Mateo Ximenes, and now subjoin one wrought out from various particulars gathered among the gossips of the fortress.

LEGEND OF THE MOOR'S LEGACY

JUST within the fortress of the Alhambra, in front of the royal palace, is a broad open esplanade, called the place or square of the cisterns (*la plaza de los algibes*), so called from being undermined by reservoirs of water, hidden from sight, and which have existed from the time of the Moors. At one corner of this esplanade is a Moorish well, cut through the living rock to a great depth, the water of which is cold as ice and clear as crystal. The wells made by the Moors are always in repute, for it is well known what pains they took to penetrate to the purest and sweetest springs and fountains. The one we are speaking of is famous throughout Granada, insomuch that the water-carriers, some bearing great water-jars on their shoulders, others driving asses before them, laden with earthen vessels, are ascending and descending the steep woody avenues of the Alhambra from early dawn until a late hour of the night.

Fountains and wells, ever since the scriptural days, have been noted gossiping places in hot climates, and at the well in question there is a kind of perpetual club kept up during the live-long day, by the invalids, old women, and other curious do-nothing folk of the fortress, who sit here on the

stone benches under an awning spread over the well to shelter the toll-gatherer from the sun, and dawdle over the gossip of the fortress, and question any water-carrier that arrives about the news of the city, and make long comments on everything they hear and see. Not an hour of the day but loitering housewives and idle maid-servants may be seen, lingering with pitcher on head or in hand, to hear the last of the endless tattle of these worthies.

Among the water-carriers who once resorted to this well there was a sturdy, strong-backed, bandy-legged little fellow named Pedro Gil, but called Peregil for shortness. Being a water-carrier, he was a Gallego, or native of Galicia, of course. Nature seems to have formed races of men as she has of animals for different kinds of drudgery. In France the shoeblacks are all Savoyards, the porters of hotels all Swiss, and in the days of hoops and hair powder in England, no man could give the regular swing to a sedan chair but a bog-trotting Irishman. So in Spain the carriers of water and bearers of burdens are all sturdy little natives of Galicia. No man says, "get me a porter," but, "call a Gallego."

To return from this digression. Peregil the Gallego had begun business with merely a great earthen jar, which he carried upon his shoulder; by degrees he rose in the world, and was enabled to purchase an assistant, of a correspondent class of animals, being a stout shaggy-haired donkey. On each side of this his long-eared aid-de-camp, in a kind of pannier, were slung his water-jars covered with fig leaves to protect them from the sun. There was not a more industrious water-carrier in all Granada, nor one more merry withal. The streets rang with his cheerful voice as he trudged after his donkey, singing forth the usual summer note that resounds through the Spanish towns: "*quien quiere agua—agua mas fria que la nieve.*—Who wants water—water colder than snow—who wants water from the well of the Alhambra—cold as ice and clear as crystal?" When he served a customer with a sparkling glass, it was always with a pleasant word that caused a smile, and if, perchance, it

was a comely dame, or dimpling damsel, it was always with a sly leer and a compliment to her beauty that was irresistible. Thus Peregil the Gallego was noted throughout all Granada for being one of the civilest, pleasantest and happiest of mortals. Yet it is not he who sings loudest and jokes most that has the lightest heart. Under all this air of merriment, honest Peregil had his cares and troubles. He had a large family of ragged children to support, who were hungry and clamorous as a nest of young swallows, and beset him with their outcries for food whenever he came home of an evening. He had a helpmate, too, who was anything but a help to him. She had been a village beauty before marriage, noted for her skill in dancing the bolero and rattling the castanets, and she still retained her early propensities, spending the hard earnings of honest Peregil in frippery, and laying the very donkey under requisition for junketing parties into the country on Sundays and saints' days, and those innumerable holydays which are rather more numerous in Spain than the days of the week. With all this she was a little of a slattern, something more of a lie-a-bed, and, above all, a gossip of the first water; neglecting house, household, and everything else, to loiter slip-shod in the houses of her gossip neighbors.

He, however, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, accommodates the yoke of matrimony to the submissive neck. Peregil bore all the heavy dispensations of wife and children with as meek a spirit as his donkey bore the water-jars; and, however he might shake his ears in private, never ventured to question the household virtues of his slattern spouse.

He loved his children, too, even as an owl loves its owlets, seeing in them his own image multiplied and perpetuated, for they were a sturdy, long-backed, bandy-legged little brood. The great pleasure of honest Peregil was, whenever he could afford himself a scanty holyday and had a handful of maravedies to spare, to take the whole litter forth with him, some in his arms, some tugging at his skirts, and some trudging at his heels, and to treat them to a gambol among

the orchards of the Vega, while his wife was dancing with her holyday friends in the Angosturas of the Darro.

It was a late hour one summer night, and most of the water-carriers had desisted from their toils. The day had been uncommonly sultry; the night was one of those delicious moonlights which tempt the inhabitants of those southern climes to indemnify themselves for the heat and inaction of the day, by lingering in the open air and enjoying its tempered sweetness until after midnight. Customers for water were therefore still abroad. Peregil, like a considerate, painstaking little father, thought of his hungry children. "One more journey to the well," said he to himself, "to earn a good Sunday's puchero for the little ones." So saying, he trudged rapidly up the steep avenue of the Alhambra, singing as he went, and now and then bestowing a hearty thwack with a cudgel on the flanks of his donkey, either by way of cadence to the song, or refreshment to the animal; for dry blows serve in lieu for provender in Spain, for all beasts of burden.

When arrived at the well, he found it deserted by every one except a solitary stranger in Moorish garb, seated on the stone bench in the moonlight. Peregil paused at first, and regarded him with surprise, not unmixed with awe, but the Moor feebly beckoned him to approach.

"I am faint and ill," said he; "aid me to return to the city, and I will pay thee double what thou couldst gain by thy jars of water."

The honest heart of the little water-carrier was touched with compassion at the appeal of the stranger. "God forbid," said he, "that I should ask fee or reward for doing a common act of humanity."

He accordingly helped the Moor on his donkey, and set off slowly for Granada, the poor Moslem being so weak that it was necessary to hold him on the animal to keep him from falling to the earth.

When they entered the city, the water-carrier demanded whither he should conduct him. "Alas!" said the Moor,

faintly, "I have neither home nor habitation. I am a stranger in the land. Suffer me to lay my head this night beneath thy roof and thou shalt be amply repaid."

Honest Peregril thus saw himself unexpectedly saddled with an infidel guest, but he was too humane to refuse a night's shelter to a fellow-being in so forlorn a plight; so he conducted the Moor to his dwelling. The children, who had sallied forth, open-mouthed as usual, on hearing the tramp of the donkey, ran back with affright, when they beheld the turbaned stranger, and hid themselves behind their mother. The latter stepped forth intrepidly, like a ruffling hen before her brood, when a vagrant dog approaches.

"What infidel companion," cried she, "is this you have brought home at this late hour, to draw upon us the eyes of the Inquisition?"

"Be quiet, wife," replied the Gallego, "here is a poor sick stranger, without friend or home: wouldst thou turn him forth to perish in the streets?"

The wife would still have remonstrated, for, though she lived in a hovel, she was a furious stickler for the credit of her house; the little water-carrier, however, for once was stiff-necked, and refused to bend beneath the yoke. He assisted the poor Moslem to alight, and spread a mat and a sheep-skin for him, on the ground, in the coolest part of the house; being the only kind of bed that his poverty afforded.

In a little while the Moor was seized with violent convulsions, which defied all the ministering skill of the simple water-carrier. The eye of the poor patient acknowledged his kindness. During an interval of his fits he called him to his side, and addressing him in a low voice: "My end," said he, "I fear is at hand. If I die I bequeath you this box as a reward for your charity." So saying, he opened his albornoz, or cloak, and showed a small box of sandal wood, strapped round his body.

"God grant, my friend," replied the worthy little Gallego, "that you may live many years to enjoy your treasure, whatever it may be."

The Moor shook his head; he laid his hand upon the box, and would have said something more concerning it, but his convulsions returned with increased violence, and in a little while he expired.

The water-carrier's wife was now as one distracted. "This comes," said she, "of your foolish good nature, always running into scrapes to oblige others. What will become of us when this corpse is found in our house? We shall be sent to prison as murderers; and if we escape with our lives, shall be ruined by notaries and alguazils."

Poor Peregil was in equal tribulation, and almost repented himself of having done a good deed. At length a thought struck him. "It is not yet day," said he. "I can convey the dead body out of the city and bury it in the sands on the banks of the Xenil. No one saw the Moor enter our dwelling, and no one will know anything of his death." So said, so done. The wife aided him: they rolled the body of the unfortunate Moslem in the mat on which he had expired, laid it across the ass, and Peregil set out with it for the banks of the river.

As ill luck would have it, there lived opposite to the water-carrier a barber named Pedrillo Pedrugo, one of the most prying, tattling, mischief-making of his gossip tribe. He was a weasel-faced, spider-legged varlet, supple and insinuating; the famous Barber of Seville could not surpass him for his universal knowledge of the affairs of others, and he had no more power of retention than a sieve. It was said that he slept with but one eye at a time, and kept one ear uncovered, so that, even in his sleep, he might see and hear all that was going on. Certain it is, he was a sort of scandalous chronicle for the quidnuncs of Granada, and had more customers than all the rest of his fraternity.

This meddlesome barber heard Peregil arrive at an unusual hour of night, and the exclamations of his wife and children. His head was instantly popped out of a little window which served him as a lookout, and he saw his neighbor assist a man in a Moorish garb into his dwelling. This was

so strange an occurrence that Pedrillo Pedrugo slept not a wink that night—every five minutes he was at his loophole, watching the lights that gleamed through the chinks of his neighbor's door, and before daylight he beheld Peregil sally forth with his donkey unusually laden.

The inquisitive barber was in a fidget; he slipped on his clothes, and, stealing forth silently, followed the water-carrier at a distance, until he saw him dig a hole in the sandy bank of the Xenil, and bury something that had the appearance of a dead body.

The barber hied him home and fidgeted about his shop, setting everything upside down, until sunrise. He then took a basin under his arm, and sallied forth to the house of his daily customer, the Alcalde.

The Alcalde was just risen. Pedrillo Pedrugo seated him in a chair, threw a napkin round his neck, put a basin of hot water under his chin, and began to mollify his beard with his fingers.

"Strange doings," said Pedrugo, who played barber and newsmonger at the same time. "Strange doings! Robbery, and murder, and burial, all in one night!"

"Hey? how! What is it you say?" cried the Alcalde.

"I say," replied the barber, rubbing a piece of soap over the nose and mouth of the dignitary, for a Spanish barber disdains to employ a brush; "I say that Peregil the Gallego has robbed and murdered a Moorish Mussulman, and buried him this blessed night—*maldita sea la noche*—accursed be the night for the same!"

"But how do you know all this?" demanded the Alcalde.

"Be patient, senor, and you shall hear all about it," replied Pedrillo, taking him by the nose and sliding a razor over his cheek. He then recounted all that he had seen, going through both operations at the same time, shaving his beard, washing his chin, and wiping him dry with a dirty napkin, while he was robbing, murdering, and burying the Moslem.

Now, it so happened that this Alcalde was one of the most

overbearing, and at the same time most griping and corrupt curmudgeons in all Granada. It could not be denied, however, that he set a high value upon justice, for he sold it at its weight in gold. He presumed the case in point to be one of murder and robbery; doubtless there must be rich spoil; how was it to be secured into the legitimate hands of the law? for as to merely entrapping the delinquent—that would be feeding the gallows: but entrapping the booty—that would be enriching the judge; and such, according to his creed, was the great end of justice. So thinking, he summoned to his presence his trustiest alguazil; a gaunt, hungry-looking varlet, clad, according to the custom of his order, in the ancient Spanish garb—a broad black beaver, turned up at the sides; a quaint ruff, a small black cloak dangling from his shoulders; rusty black underclothes that set off his spare wiry form; while in his hand he bore a slender white wand, the dreaded insignia of his office. Such was the legal bloodhound of the ancient Spanish breed that he put upon the traces of the unlucky water-carrier; and such was his speed and certainty that he was upon the haunches of poor Peregil before he had returned to his dwelling, and brought both him and his donkey before the dispenser of justice.

The Alcalde bent upon him one of his most terrific frowns. “Hark ye, culprit!” roared he in a voice that made the knees of the little Galle go smite together—“Hark ye, culprit! there is no need of denying thy guilt: everything is known to me. A gallows is the proper reward for the crime thou hast committed, but I am merciful, and readily listen to reason. The man that has been murdered in thy house was a Moor, an infidel, the enemy of our faith. It was doubtless in a fit of religious zeal that thou hast slain him. I will be indulgent, therefore; render up the property of which thou hast robbed him, and we will hush the matter up.”

The poor water-carrier called upon all the saints to witness his innocence; alas! not one of them appeared, and if there had, the Alcalde would have disbelieved the whole calendar. The water-carrier related the whole story of the

dying Moor with the straightforward simplicity of truth, but it was all in vain: "Wilt thou persist in saying," demanded the judge, "that this Moslem had neither gold nor jewels, which were the object of thy cupidity?"

"As I hope to be saved, your worship," replied the water-carrier, "he had nothing but a small box of sandal wood, which he bequeathed to me in reward of my services."

"A box of sandal wood! a box of sandal wood!" exclaimed the Alcalde, his eyes sparkling at the idea of precious jewels, "and where is this box? where have you concealed it?"

"An' it please your grace," replied the water-carrier, "it is in one of the panniers of my mule, and heartily at the service of your worship."

He had hardly spoken the words when the keen alguazil darted off and reappeared in an instant with the mysterious box of sandal wood. The Alcalde opened it with an eager and trembling hand; all pressed forward to gaze upon the treasures it was expected to contain; when, to their disappointment, nothing appeared within but a parchment scroll, covered with Arabic characters, and an end of a waxen taper!

When there is nothing to be gained by the conviction of a prisoner, justice, even in Spain, is apt to be impartial. The Alcalde, having recovered from his disappointment and found there was really no booty in the case, now listened dispassionately to the explanation of the water-carrier, which was corroborated by the testimony of his wife. Being convinced, therefore, of his innocence, he discharged him from arrest; nay more, he permitted him to carry off the Moor's legacy, the box of sandal wood and its contents, as the well-merited reward of his humanity; but he retained his donkey in payment of cost and charges.

Behold the unfortunate little Gallego reduced once more to the necessity of being his own water-carrier, and trudging up to the well of the Alhambra with a great earthen jar upon his shoulder. As he toiled up the hill in the heat of a summer noon his usual good humor forsook him. "Dog of an

Alcalde!" would he cry, "to rob a poor man of the means of his subsistence—of the best friend he had in the world!" And then at the remembrance of the beloved companion of his labors all the kindness of his nature would break forth. "Ah, donkey of my heart!" would he exclaim, resting his burden on a stone, and wiping the sweat from his brow. "Ah, donkey of my heart! I warrant me thou thinkest of thy old master! I warrant me thou missest the water jars—poor beast!"

To add to his afflictions his wife received him, on his return home, with whimperings and repinings; she had clearly the vantage-ground of him, having warned him not to commit the egregious act of hospitality that had brought on him all these misfortunes, and like a knowing woman she took every occasion to throw her superior sagacity in his teeth. If ever her children lacked food, or needed a new garment, she would answer with a sneer, "Go to your father; he's heir to King Chico of the Alhambra. Ask him to help you out of the Moor's strong box."

Was ever poor mortal more soundly punished for having done a good action! The unlucky Peregil was grieved in flesh and spirit, but still he bore meekly with the railings of his spouse. At length one evening, when, after a hot day's toil, she taunted him in the usual manner, he lost all patience. He did not venture to retort upon her, but his eye rested upon the box of sandal wood, which lay on a shelf with lid half open, as if laughing in mockery of his vexation. Seizing it up he dashed it with indignation on the floor. "Unlucky was the day that I ever set eyes on thee," he cried, "or sheltered thy master beneath my roof."

As the box struck the floor the lid flew wide open, and the parchment scroll rolled forth. Peregil sat regarding the scroll for some time in moody silence. At length rallying his ideas, "Who knows," thought he, "but this writing may be of some importance, as the Moor seems to have guarded it with such care." Picking it up, therefore, he put it in his bosom, and the next morning, as he was crying water

through the streets, he stopped at the shop of a Moor, a native of Tangier, who sold trinkets and perfumery in the Zacatin, and asked him to explain the contents.

The Moor read the scroll attentively, then stroked his beard and smiled. "This manuscript," said he, "is a form of incantation for the recovery of hidden treasure, that is under the power of enchantment. It is said to have such virtue that the strongest bolts and bars, nay, the adamantine rock itself, will yield before it."

"Bah!" cried the little Gallego, "what is all that to me. I am no enchanter and know nothing of buried treasure." So saying he shouldered his water-jar, left the scroll in the hands of the Moor, and trudged forward on his daily rounds.

That evening, however, as he rested himself about twilight at the well of the Alhambra, he found a number of gossips assembled at the place, and their conversation, as is not unusual at that shadowy hour, turned upon old tales and traditions of a supernatural nature. Being all poor as rats, they dwelt with peculiar fondness upon the popular theme of enchanted riches left by the Moors in various parts of the Alhambra. Above all, they concurred in the belief that there were great treasures buried deep in the earth under the tower of the Seven Floors.

These stories made an unusual impression on the mind of honest Peregil, and they sank deeper and deeper into his thoughts as he returned alone down the darkling avenues. "If, after all, there should be treasure hid beneath that tower—and if the scroll I left with the Moor should enable me to get at it!" In the sudden ecstasy of the thought he had well-nigh let fall his water jar.

That night he tumbled and tossed, and could scarcely get a wink of sleep for the thoughts that were bewildering his brain. In the morning, bright and early, he repaired to the shop of the Moor and told him all that was passing in his mind. "You can read Arabic," said he, "suppose we go together to the tower and try the effect of the charm; if it

fails we are no worse off than before, but if it succeeds we will share equally all the treasure we may discover."

"Hold," replied the Moslem, "this writing is not sufficient of itself; it must be read at midnight by the light of a taper singularly compounded and prepared, the ingredients of which are not within my reach. Without such taper the scoll is of no avail."

"Say no more!" cried the little Gallego. "I have such a taper at hand and will bring it here in a moment." So saying he hastened home, and soon returned with the end of a yellow wax taper that he had found in the box of sandal wood.

The Moor felt it and smelled of it. "Here are rare and costly perfumes," said he, "combined with this yellow wax. This is the kind of taper specified in the scroll. While this burns, the strongest walls and most secret caverns will remain open; woe to him, however, who lingers within until it be extinguished. He will remain enchanted with the treasure."

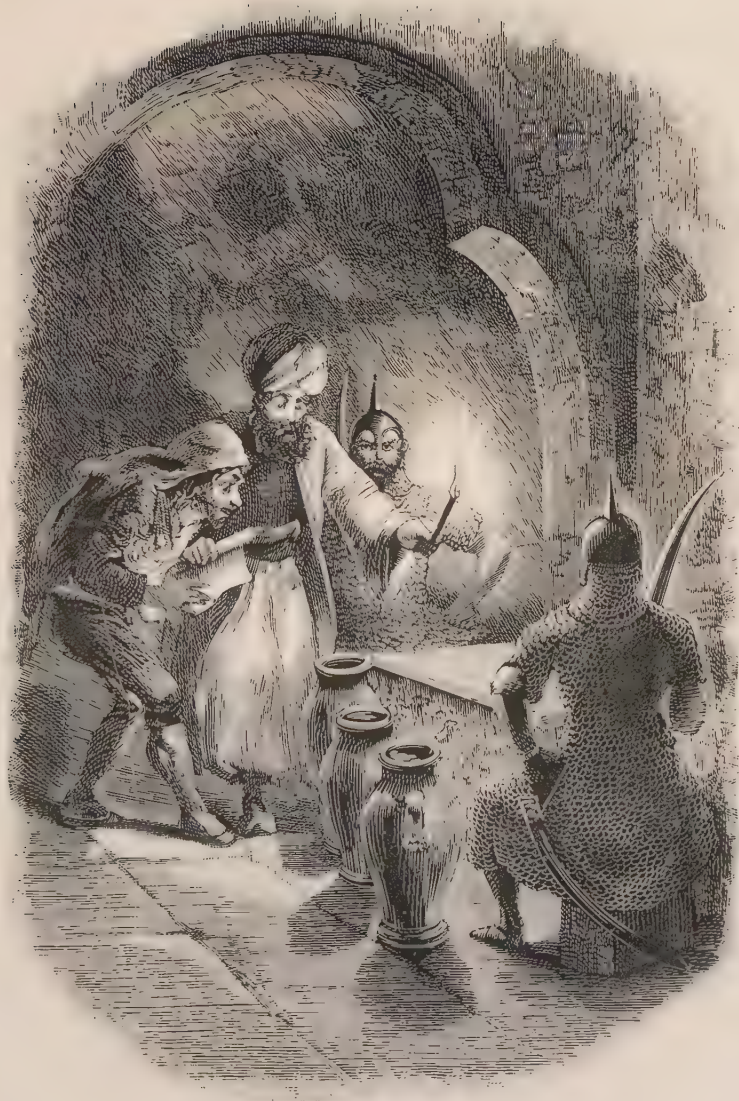
It was now agreed between them to try the charm that very night. At a late hour, therefore, when nothing was stirring but bats and owls, they ascended the woody hill of the Alhambra and approached that awful tower, shrouded by trees and rendered formidable by so many traditionary tales.

By the light of a lantern, they groped their way through bushes and over fallen stones to the door of a vault beneath the tower. With fear and trembling they descended a flight of steps cut into the rock. It led to an empty chamber, damp and drear, from which another flight of steps led to a deeper vault. In this way they descended for several flights, leading into as many vaults, one below the other, but the floor of the fourth was solid, and though, according to tradition, there remained three vaults still below, it was said to be impossible to penetrate further, the residue being shut up by strong enchantment. The air of this vault was damp and chilly, and had an earthy smell, and the light scarce cast

forth any rays. They paused here for a time in breathless suspense, until they faintly heard the clock of the watch tower strike midnight; upon this they lighted the waxen taper, which diffused an odor of myrrh, and frankincense, and storax.

The Moor began to read in a hurried voice. He had scarce finished when there was a noise as of subterraneous thunder. The earth shook and the floor yawning open disclosed a flight of steps. Trembling with awe they descended, and by the light of the lantern found themselves in another vault, covered with Arabic inscriptions. In the center stood a great chest, secured with seven bands of steel, at each end of which sat an enchanted Moor in armor, but motionless as a statue, being controlled by the power of the incantation. Before the chest were several jars filled with gold and silver and precious stones. In the largest of these they thrust their arms up to the elbow, and at every dip hauled forth hands full of broad yellow pieces of Moorish gold, or bracelets and ornaments of the same precious metal, while occasionally a necklace of Oriental pearls would stick to their fingers. Still they trembled and breathed short while cramming their pockets with the spoils; and cast many a fearful glance at the two enchanted Moors, who sat grim and motionless, glaring upon them with unwinking eyes. At length, struck with a sudden panic at some fancied noise, they both rushed up the staircase, tumbled over one another into the upper apartment, overturned and extinguished the waxen taper, and the pavement again closed with a thundering sound.

Filled with dismay, they did not pause until they had groped their way out of the tower, and beheld the stars shining through the trees. Then seating themselves upon the grass, they divided the spoil, determining to content themselves for the present with this mere skimming of the jars, but to return on some future night and drain them to the bottom. To make sure of each other's good faith, also, they divided the talismans between them, one retaining the



LEGEND OF THE MOOR'S LEGACY.

Irving, Vol. Two, p. 144.

scroll and the other the taper; this done, they set off with light hearts and well lined pockets for Granada.

As they wended their way down the hill, the shrewd Moor whispered a word of counsel in the ear of the simple little water-carrier.

"Friend Peregil," said he, "all this affair must be kept a profound secret until we have secured the treasure and conveyed it out of harm's way. If a whisper of it gets to the ear of the Alcalde we are undone!"

"Certainly!" replied the Gallego; "nothing can be more true."

"Friend Peregil," said the Moor, "you are a discreet man, and I make no doubt can keep a secret; but—you have a wife—"

"She shall not know a word of it!" replied the little water-carrier sturdily.

"Enough," said the Moor, "I depend upon thy discretion and thy promise."

Never was promise more positive and sincere; but, alas! what man can keep a secret from his wife? Certainly not such a one as Peregil the water-carrier, who was one of the most loving and tractable of husbands. On his return home he found his wife moping in a corner.

"Mighty well!" cried she, as he entered; "you've come at last; after rambling about until this hour of the night. I wonder you have not brought home another Moor as a house-mate." Then bursting into tears she began to wring her hands and smite her breast. "Unhappy woman that I am!" exclaimed she, "what will become of me! My house stripped and plundered by lawyers and alguazils; my husband a do-no-good that no longer brings home bread for his family, but goes rambling about, day and night, with infidel Moors. Oh, my children! my children! what will become of us; we shall all have to beg in the streets!"

Honest Peregil was so moved by the distress of his spouse that he could not help whimpering also. His heart was as full as his pocket, and not to be restrained. Thrusting his hand

into the latter he hauled forth three or four broad gold pieces and slipped them into her bosom. The poor woman stared with astonishment, and could not understand the meaning of this golden shower. Before she could recover her surprise, the little Gallego drew forth a chain of gold and dangled it before her, capering with exultation, his mouth distended from ear to ear.

"Holy Virgin protect us!" exclaimed the wife. "What hast thou been doing, Peregil? Surely thou hast not been committing murder and robbery!"

The idea scarce entered the brain of the poor woman than it became a certainty with her. She saw a prison and a gallows in the distance, and a little bandy-legged Gallego dangling pendant from it; and, overcome by the horrors conjured up by her imagination, fell into violent hysterics.

What could the poor man do? He had no other means of pacifying his wife and dispelling the phantoms of her fancy than by relating the whole story of his good fortune. This, however, he did not do until he had exacted from her the most solemn promise to keep it a profound secret from every living being.

To describe her joy would be impossible. She flung her arms round the neck of her husband, and almost strangled him with her caresses. "Now, wife!" exclaimed the little man with honest exultation, "what say you now to the Moor's legacy? Henceforth never abuse me for helping a fellow creature in distress."

The honest Gallego retired to his sheepskin mat, and slept as soundly as if on a bed of down. Not so his wife.—She emptied the whole contents of his pockets upon the mat, and sat all night counting gold pieces of Arabic coin, trying on necklaces and earrings, and fancying the figure she should one day make when permitted to enjoy her riches.

On the following morning the honest Gallego took a broad golden coin, and repaired with it to a jeweler's shop in the Zacatin to offer it for sale; pretending to have found it among the ruins of the Alhambra. The jeweler saw that

it had an Arabic inscription and was of the purest gold; he offered, however, but a third of its value, with which the water-carrier was perfectly content. Peregil now bought new clothes for his little flock, and all kinds of toys, together with ample provisions for a hearty meal, and returning to his dwelling set all his children dancing around him, while he capered in the midst, the happiest of fathers.

The wife of the water-carrier kept her promise of secrecy with surprising strictness. For a whole day and a half she went about with a look of mystery and a heart swelling almost to bursting, yet she held her peace, though surrounded by her gossips. It is true she could not help giving herself a few airs, apologized for her ragged dress, and talked of ordering a new basquina all trimmed with gold lace and bugles, and a new lace mantilla. She threw out hints of her husband's intention of leaving off his trade of water-carrying, as it did not altogether agree with his health. In fact she thought they should all retire to the country for the summer, that the children might have the benefit of the mountain air, for there was no living in the city in this sultry season.

The neighbors stared at each other, and thought the poor woman had lost her wits, and her airs and graces and elegant pretensions were the theme of universal scoffing and merriment among her friends, the moment her back was turned.

If she restrained herself abroad, however, she indemnified herself at home, and, putting a string of rich Oriental pearls round her neck, Moorish bracelets on her arms; an aigrette of diamonds on her head, sailed backward and forward in her slattern rags about the room, now and then stopping to admire herself in a piece of broken mirror. Nay, in the impulse of her simple vanity, she could not resist on one occasion showing herself at the window, to enjoy the effect of her finery on the passers by.

As the fates would have it, Pedrillo Pedrugo, the meddling barber, was at this moment sitting idly in his shop on

the opposite side of the street, when his ever watchful eye caught the sparkle of a diamond. In an instant he was at his loophole, reconnoitering the slattern spouse of the water-carrier, decorated with the splendor of an eastern bride. No sooner had he taken an accurate inventory of her ornaments than he posted off with all speed to the Alcalde. In a little while the hungry alguazil was again on the scent, and before the day was over the unfortunate Peregil was again dragged into the presence of the judge.

"How is this, villain!" cried the Alcalde in a furious voice. "You told me that the infidel who died in your house left nothing behind but an empty coffer, and now I hear of your wife flaunting in her rags decked out with pearls and diamonds. Wretch that thou art! prepare to render up the spoils of thy miserable victim, and to swing on the gallows that is already tired of waiting for thee."

The terrified water-carrier fell on his knees, and made a full relation of the marvelous manner in which he had gained his wealth. The Alcalde, the alguazil, and the inquisitive barber listened with greedy ears to this Arabian tale of enchanted treasure. The alguazil was dispatched to bring the Moor who had assisted in the incantation. The Moslem entered half frightened out of his wits at finding himself in the hands of the harpies of the law. When he beheld the water-carrier standing with sheepish look and downcast countenance, he comprehended the whole matter. "Miserable animal," said he, as he passed near him, "did I not warn thee against babbling to thy wife?"

The story of the Moor coincided exactly with that of his colleague; but the Alcalde affected to be slow of belief, and threw out menaces of imprisonment and rigorous investigation.

"Softly, good Senor Alcalde," said the Mussulman, who by this time had recovered his usual shrewdness and self-possession. "Let us not mar fortune's favors in the scramble for them. Nobody knows anything of this matter but ourselves; let us keep the secret. There is wealth enough

in the cave to enrich us all. Promise a fair division, and all shall be produced; refuse, and the cave shall remain forever closed."

The Alcalde consulted apart with the alguazil. The latter was an old fox in his profession. "Promise anything," said he, "until you get possession of the treasure. You may then seize upon the whole, and if he and his accomplice dare to murmur, threaten them with the fagot and the stake as infidels and sorcerers."

The Alcalde relished the advice. Smoothing his brow and turning to the Moor—"This is a strange story," said he, "and may be true, but I must have ocular proof of it. This very night you must repeat the incantation in my presence. If there be really such treasure, we will share it amicably between us, and say nothing further of the matter; if ye have deceived me, expect no mercy at my hands. In the meantime you must remain in custody."

The Moor and the water-carrier cheerfully agreed to these conditions, satisfied that the event would prove the truth of their words.

Toward midnight the Alcalde sallied forth secretly, attended by the alguazil and the meddlesome barber, all strongly armed. They conducted the Moor and the water-carrier as prisoners, and were provided with the stout donkey of the latter, to bear off the expected treasure. They arrived at the tower without being observed, and tying the donkey to a fig-tree, descended into the fourth vault of the tower.

The scroll was produced, the yellow waxen taper lighted, and the Moor read the form of incantation. The earth trembled as before, and the pavement opened with a thundering sound, disclosing the narrow flight of steps. The Alcalde, the alguazil, and the barber were struck aghast, and could not summon courage to descend. The Moor and the water-carrier entered the lower vault and found the two Moors seated as before, silent and motionless. They removed two of the great jars, filled with golden coin and precious stones.

The water-carrier bore them up one by one upon his shoulders, but though a strong-backed little man, and accustomed to carry burdens, he staggered beneath their weight, and found, when slung on each side of his donkey, they were as much as the animal could bear.

"Let us be content for the present," said the Moor; "here is as much treasure as we can carry off without being perceived, and enough to make us all wealthy to our heart's desire."

"Is there more treasure remaining behind?" demanded the Alcalde.

"The greatest prize of all," said the Moor; "a huge coffer, bound with bands of steel, and filled with pearls and precious stones."

"Let us have up the coffer by all means," cried the grasping Alcalde.

"I will descend for no more," said the Moor, doggedly. "Enough is enough for a reasonable man; more is superfluous."

"And I," said the water-carrier, "will bring up no further burden to break the back of my poor donkey."

Finding commands, threats, and entreaties equally vain, the Alcalde turned to his two adherents. "Aid me," said he, "to bring up the coffer, and its contents shall be divided between us." So saying he descended the steps, followed, with trembling reluctance, by the alguazil and the barber.

No sooner did the Moor behold them fairly earthed than he extinguished the yellow taper: the pavement closed with its usual crash, and the three worthies remained buried in its womb.

He then hastened up the different flights of steps, nor stopped until in the open air. The little water-carrier followed him as fast as his short legs would permit.

"What hast thou done?" cried Peregil, as soon as he could recover breath. "The Alcalde and the other two are shut up in the vault!"

"It is the will of Allah!" said the Moor, devoutly.

“And will you not release them?” demanded the Gallego.

“Allah forbid!” replied the Moor, smoothing his beard. “It is written in the book of fate that they shall remain enchanted until some future adventurer shall come to break the charm. The will of God be done!” So saying he hurled the end of the waxen taper far among the gloomy thickets of the glen.

There was now no remedy; so the Moor and the water-carrier proceeded with the richly-laden donkey toward the city: nor could honest Peregil refrain from hugging and kissing his long-eared fellow-laborer, thus restored to him from the clutches of the law; and, in fact, it is doubtful which gave the simple-hearted little man most joy at the moment, the gaining of the treasure or the recovery of the donkey.

The two partners in good luck divided their spoil amicably and fairly, excepting that the Moor, who had a little taste for trinketry, made out to get into his heap the most of the pearls and precious stones, and other baubles; but then he always gave the water-carrier in lieu magnificent jewels of massy gold four times the size, with which the latter was heartily content. They took care not to linger within reach of accidents, but made off to enjoy their wealth undisturbed in other countries. The Moor returned into Africa, to his native city of Tetuan, and the Gallego, with his wife, his children and his donkey, made the best of his way to Portugal. Here, under the admonition and tuition of his wife, he became a personage of some consequence, for she made the little man array his long body and short legs in doublet and hose, with a feather in his hat and a sword by his side; and, laying aside the familiar appellation of Peregil, assume the more sonorous title of Don Pedro Gil. His progeny grew up a thriving and merry-hearted, though short and bandy-legged generation; while the Senora Gil, be-fringed, belaced, and be-tasseled from her head to her heels, with glittering rings on every finger, became a model of slattern fashion and finery.

As to the Alcalde, and his adjuncts, they remained shut up under the great tower of the Seven Floors, and there they remain spellbound at the present day. Whenever there shall be a lack in Spain of pimping barbers, sharking alguazils, and corrupt Alcaldes, they may be sought after; but if they have to wait until such time for their deliverance, there is danger of their enchantment enduring until doomsday.

VISITORS TO THE ALHAMBRA

IT is now nearly three months since I took up my abode in the Alhambra, during which time the progress of the season has wrought many changes. When I first arrived everything was in the freshness of May; the foliage of the trees was still tender and transparent; the pomegranate had not yet shed its brilliant crimson blossoms; the orchards of the Xenil and the Darro were in full bloom; the rocks were hung with wild flowers, and Granada seemed completely surrounded by a wilderness of roses, among which innumerable nightingales sang, not merely in the night, but all day long.

The advance of summer has withered the rose and silenced the nightingale and the distant country begins to look parched and sunburned; though a perennial verdure reigns immediately round the city, and in the deep narrow valleys at the foot of the snow-capped mountains.

The Alhambra possesses retreats graduated to the heat of the weather, among which the most peculiar is the almost subterranean apartment of the baths. This still retains its ancient Oriental character, though stamped with the touching traces of decline. At the entrance, opening into a small court formerly adorned with flowers, is a hall, moderate in size, but light and graceful in architecture. It is overlooked by a small gallery supported by marble pillars and morisco arches. An alabaster fountain in the center of the pavement still throws up a jet of water to cool the place. On each side

are deep alcoves with raised platforms, where the bathers after their ablutions reclined on luxurious cushions, soothed to voluptuous repose by the fragrance of the perfumed air and the notes of soft music from the gallery. Beyond this hall are the interior chambers, still more private and retired, where no light is admitted but through small apertures in the vaulted ceilings. Here was the sanctum sanctorum of female privacy, where the beauties of the harem indulged in the luxury of the baths. A soft mysterious light reigns through the place, the broken baths are still there, and traces of ancient elegance.

The prevailing silence and obscurity have made this a favorite resort of bats, who nestle during the day in the dark nooks and corners, and, on being disturbed, flit mysteriously about the twilight chambers, heightening in an indescribable degree their air of desertion and decay.

In this cool and elegant though dilapidated retreat, which has the freshness and seclusion of a grotto, I have of late passed the sultry hours of the day; emerging toward sunset, and bathing, or rather swimming, at night in the great reservoir of the main court. In this way I have been enabled in a measure to counteract the relaxing and enervating influence of the climate.

My dream of absolute sovereignty, however, is at an end: I was roused from it lately by the report of firearms, which reverberated among the towers as if the castle had been taken by surprise. On sallying forth I found an old cavalier with a number of domestics in possession of the Hall of Ambassadors. He was an ancient count, who had come up from his palace in Granada to pass a short time in the Alhambra for the benefit of purer air, and who, being a veteran and inveterate sportsman, was endeavoring to get an appetite for his breakfast by shooting at swallows from the balconies. It was a harmless amusement, for though, by the alertness of his attendants in loading his pieces, he was enabled to keep up a brisk fire, I could not accuse him of the death of a single swallow. Nay, the birds themselves seemed to en-

joy the spot, and to deride his want of skill, skimming in circles close to the balconies, and twittering as they darted by.

The arrival of this old gentleman has in some measure changed the aspect of affairs, but has likewise afforded matter for agreeable speculation. We have tacitly shared the empire between us, like the last kings of Granada, excepting that we maintain a most amicable alliance. He reigns absolute over the Court of the Lions and its adjacent halls, while I maintain peaceful possession of the region of the baths and the little garden of Lindaraxa. We take our meals together under the arcades of the court, where the fountains cool the air, and bubbling rills run along the channels of the marble pavement.

In the evening a domestic circle gathers about the worthy old cavalier. The countess comes up from the city, with a favorite daughter about sixteen years of age. Then there are the official dependents of the count, his chaplain, his lawyer, his secretary, his steward, and other officers and agents of his extensive possessions. Thus he holds a kind of domestic court, where every person seeks to contribute to his amusement, without sacrificing his own pleasure or self-respect. In fact, whatever may be said of Spanish pride, it certainly does not enter into social or domestic life. Among no people are the relations between kindred more cordial, or between superior and dependent more frank and genial; in these respects there still remains, in the provincial life of Spain, much of the vaunted simplicity of the olden times.

The most interesting member of this family group, however, is the daughter of the count, the charming though almost infantile little Carmen. Her form has not yet attained its maturity, but has already the exquisite symmetry and pliant grace so prevalent in this country. Her blue eyes, fair complexion, and light hair are unusual in Andalusia, and give a mildness and gentleness to her demeanor, in contrast to the usual fire of Spanish beauty, but in perfect unison with the guileless and confiding innocence of her manners. She has, however, all the innate aptness and

versatility of her fascinating country-women, and sings, dances, and plays the guitar and other instruments to admiration. A few days after taking up his residence in the Alhambra, the count gave a domestic fete on his saint's day, assembling round him the members of his family and household, while several old servants came from his distant possessions to pay their reverence to him, and partake of the good cheer.

This patriarchal spirit which characterized the Spanish nobility in the days of their opulence has declined with their fortunes; but some who, like the count, still retain their ancient family possessions, keep up a little of the ancient system, and have their estates overrun and almost eaten up by generations of idle retainers. According to this magnificent old Spanish system, in which the national pride and generosity bore equal parts, a superannuated servant was never turned off, but became a charge for the rest of his days; nay, his children, and his children's children, and often their relations, to the right and left, became gradually entailed upon the family. Hence the huge palaces of the Spanish nobility, which have such an air of empty ostentation from the greatness of their size compared with the mediocrity and scantiness of their furniture, were absolutely required in the golden days of Spain by the patriarchal habits of their possessors. They were little better than vast barracks for the hereditary generations of hangers-on that battened at the expense of a Spanish noble. The worthy count, who has estates in various parts of the kingdom, assures me that some of them barely feed the hordes of dependents nestled upon them; who consider themselves entitled to be maintained upon the place, rent free, because their forefathers have been so for generations.

The domestic fete of the count broke in upon the usual still life of the Alhambra. Music and laughter resounded through its late silent halls; there were groups of the guests amusing themselves about the galleries and gardens, and officious servants from town hurrying through the courts,

bearing viands to the ancient kitchen, which was again alive with the tread of cooks and scullions, and blazed with unwonted fires.

The feast, for a Spanish set dinner is literally a feast, was laid in the beautiful morisco hall called "la sala de las dos Hermanas" (the saloon of the two sisters); the table groaned with abundance and a joyous conviviality prevailed round the board; for though the Spaniards are generally an abstemious people, they are complete revelers at a banquet.

For my own part, there was something peculiarly interesting in thus sitting at a feast, in the royal halls of the Alhambra, given by the representative of one of its most renowned conquerors; for the venerable count, though unwarlike himself, is the lineal descendant and representative of the "Great Captain," the illustrious Gonsalvo of Cordova, whose sword he guards in the archives of his palace at Granada.

The banquet ended, the company adjourned to the Hall of Ambassadors. Here every one contributed to the general amusement by exerting some peculiar talent; singing, improvising, telling wonderful tales, or dancing to that all pervading talisman of Spanish pleasure, the guitar.

The life and charm of the whole assemblage, however, was the gifted little Carmen. She took her part in two or three scenes from Spanish comedies, exhibiting a charming dramatic talent; she gave imitations of the popular Italian singers, with singular and whimsical felicity, and a rare quality of voice; she imitated the dialects, dances, and ballads of the gypsies and the neighboring peasantry, but did everything with a facility, a neatness, a grace, and an all-pervading prettiness, that were perfectly fascinating. The great charm of her performances, however, was their being free from all pretension or ambition of display. She seemed unconscious of the extent of her own talents, and in fact is accustomed only to exert them casually, like a child, for the amusement of the domestic circle. Her observation and tact must be remarkably quick, for her life is passed in the bosom

of her family, and she can only have had casual and transient glances at the various characters and traits, brought out *impromptu* in moments of domestic hilarity, like the one in question. It is pleasing to see the fondness and admiration with which every one of the household regards her: she is never spoken of, even by the domestics, by any other appellation than that of La Niña, "the child," an appellation which thus applied has something peculiarly kind and endearing in the Spanish language.

Never shall I think of the Alhambra without remembering the lovely little Carmen sporting in happy and innocent girlhood in its marble halls; dancing to the sound of the Moorish castanets, or mingling the silver warbling of her voice with the music of the fountains.

On this festive occasion several curious and amusing legends and traditions were told; many of which have escaped my memory; but of those that most struck me, I will endeavor to shape forth some entertainment for the reader.

LEGEND OF PRINCE AHMED AL KAMEL

OR

THE PILGRIM OF LOVE

THERE was once a Moorish king of Granada who had but one son, whom he named Ahmed, to which his courtiers added the surname of al Kamel, or the perfect, from the indubitable signs of super-excellence which they perceived in him in his very infancy. The astrologers countenanced them in their foresight, predicting everything in his favor that could make a perfect prince and a prosperous sovereign. One cloud only rested upon his destiny, and even that was of a roseate hue. He would be of an amorous temperament, and run great perils from the tender passion. If, however,

he could be kept from the allurements of love until of mature age, these dangers would be averted, and his life thereafter be one uninterrupted course of felicity.

To prevent all danger of the kind, the king wisely determined to rear the prince in a seclusion, where he should never see a female face nor hear even the name of love. For this purpose he built a beautiful palace on the brow of a hill above the Alhambra, in the midst of delightful gardens, but surrounded by lofty walls; being, in fact, the same palace known at the present day by the name of the Generalife. In this palace the youthful prince was shut up and intrusted to the guardianship and instruction of Ebon Bonabbon, one of the wisest and driest of Arabian sages, who had passed the greatest part of his life in Egypt, studying hieroglyphics and making researches among the tombs and pyramids, and who saw more charms in an Egyptian mummy than in the most tempting of living beauties. The sage was ordered to instruct the prince in all kinds of knowledge but one—he is to be kept utterly ignorant of love—“use every precaution for the purpose you may think proper,” said the king, “but remember, oh Ebon Bonabbon, if my son learns aught of that forbidden knowledge, while under your care, your head shall answer for it.” A withered smile came over the dry visage of the wise Bonabbon at the menace. “Let your majesty’s heart be as easy about your son as mine is about my head. Am I a man likely to give lessons in the idle passion?”

Under the vigilant care of the philosopher, the prince grew up in the seclusion of the palace and its gardens. He had black slaves to attend upon him—hideous mutes, who knew nothing of love, or, if they did, had not words to communicate it. His mental endowments were the peculiar care of Ebon Bonabbon, who sought to initiate him into the abstruse lore of Egypt, but in this the prince made little progress, and it was soon evident that he had no turn for philosophy.

He was, however, amazingly ductile for a youthful prince; ready to follow any advice and always guided by the last

councilor. He suppressed his yawns and listened patiently to the long and learned discourses of Ebon Bonabbon, from which he imbibed a smattering of various kinds of knowledge, and thus happily attained his twentieth year, a miracle of princely wisdom, but totally ignorant of love.

About this time, however, a change came over the conduct of the prince. He completely abandoned his studies and took to strolling about the gardens and musing by the side of the fountains. He had been taught a little music among his various accomplishments; it now engrossed a great part of his time, and a turn for poetry became apparent. The sage Ebon Bonabbon took the alarm and endeavored to work these idle humors out of him by a severe course of algebra; but the prince turned from it with distaste. "I cannot endure algebra," said he; "it is an abomination to me. I want something that speaks more to the heart."

The sage Ebon Bonabbon shook his dry head at the words. "Here's an end to philosophy," thought he. "The prince has discovered he has a heart!" He now kept anxious watch upon his pupil, and saw that the latent tenderness of his nature was in activity and only wanted an object. He wandered about the gardens of the Generaliffe in an intoxication of feelings of which he knew not the cause. Sometimes he would sit plunged in a delicious reverie; then he would seize his lute and draw from it the most touching notes, and then throw it aside and break forth into sighs and ejaculations.

By degrees this loving disposition began to extend to inanimate objects; he had his favorite flowers which he cherished with tender assiduity; then he became attached to various trees, and there was one in particular, of a graceful form and drooping foliage, on which he lavished his amorous devotion, carving his name on its bark, hanging garlands on its branches, and singing couplets in its praise, to the accompaniment of his lute.

The sage Ebon Bonabbon was alarmed at this excited state of his pupil. He saw him on the very brink of forbidden knowledge—the least hint might reveal to him the fatal

secret. Trembling for the safety of the prince, and the security of his own head, he hastened to draw him from the seductions of the garden, and shut him up in the highest tower of the Generaliffe. It contained beautiful apartments, and commanded an almost boundless prospect, but was elevated far above that atmosphere of sweets and those witching bowers so dangerous to the feelings of the too susceptible Ahmed.

What was to be done, however, to reconcile him to this restraint and to beguile the tedious hours? He had exhausted almost all kinds of agreeable knowledge; and algebra was not to be mentioned. Fortunately Ebon Bonabbon had been instructed, when in Egypt, in the language of birds, by a Jewish Rabbin, who had received it in lineal transmission from Solomon the wise, who had been taught it by the Queen of Sheba. At the very mention of such a study the eyes of the prince sparkled with animation, and he applied himself to it with such avidity that he soon became as great an adept as his master.

The tower of the Generaliffe was no longer a solitude; he had companions at hand with whom he could converse. The first acquaintance he formed was with a hawk who built his nest in a crevice of the lofty battlements, from whence he soared far and wide in quest of prey. The prince, however, found little to like or esteem in him. He was a mere pirate of the air, swaggering and boastful, whose talk was all about rapine, and carnage, and desperate exploits.

His next acquaintance was an owl, a mighty wise-looking bird, with a large head and staring eyes, who sat blinking and goggling all day in a hole in the wall, but roamed forth at night. He had great pretensions to wisdom; talked something of astrology and the moon, and hinted at the dark sciences, but he was grievously given to metaphysics, and the prince found his prosings were more ponderous than those of the sage Ebon Bonabbon.

Then there was a bat, that hung all day by his heels in the dark corner of a vault, but sallied out in a slipshod style

at twilight. He, however, had but twilight ideas on all subjects, derided things of which he had taken but an imperfect view, and seemed to take delight in nothing.

Besides these there was a swallow, with whom the prince was at first much taken. He was a smart talker, but restless, bustling, and forever on the wing; seldom remaining long enough for any continued conversation. He turned out in the end to be a mere smatterer, who did but skim over the surface of things, pretending to know everything, but knowing nothing thoroughly.

These were the only feathered associates with whom the prince had any opportunity of exercising his newly acquired language; the tower was too high for any other birds to frequent it. He soon grew weary of his new acquaintances, whose conversation spake so little to the head and nothing to the heart; and gradually relapsed into his loneliness. A winter passed away, spring opened with all its bloom and verdure, and breathing sweetness, and the happy time arrived for birds to pair and build their nests. Suddenly, as it were, a universal burst of song and melody broke forth from the groves and gardens of the Generaliffe, and reached the prince in the solitude of his tower. From every side he heard the same universal theme—love—love—love—chanted forth and responded to in every variety of note and tone. The prince listened in silence and perplexity. “What can be this love,” thought he, “of which the world seems so full, and of which I know nothing?” He applied for information to his friend the hawk. The ruffian bird answered in a tone of scorn—“You must apply,” said he, “to the vulgar, peaceable birds of earth, who are made for the prey of us princes of the air. My trade is war, and fighting my delight. In a word, I am a warrior, and know nothing of this thing called love.”

The prince turned from him with disgust, and sought the owl in his retreat. “This is a bird,” said he, “of peaceful habits, and may be able to solve my question.” So he asked the owl to tell him what was this love about which all the birds in the groves below were singing.

Upon this the owl put on a look of offended dignity. "My nights," said he, "are taken up in study and research, and my days in ruminating in my cell upon all that I have learned. As to these singing birds of whom you talk, I never listen to them. I despise them and their themes. Allah be praised! I cannot sing. In a word, I am a philosopher, and know nothing of this thing called love."

The prince now repaired to the vault where his friend the bat was hanging by the heels, and propounded the same question. The bat wrinkled up his nose into a most snappish expression. "Why do you disturb me in my morning's nap with such an idle question," said he peevishly. "I only fly by twilight when all birds are asleep, and never trouble myself with their concerns. I am neither bird nor beast, and I thank heaven for it. I have found out the villainy of the whole of them, and hate them, one and all. In a word, I am a misanthrope, and know nothing of this thing called love."

As a last resort, the prince now sought the swallow, and stopped him just as he was circling about the summit of the tower. The swallow as usual was in a prodigious hurry, and had scarce time to make a reply. "Upon my word," said he, "I have so much public business to attend to, and so many pursuits to follow, that I have had no time to think on the subject. I have every day a thousand visits to pay; a thousand affairs of importance to examine into, that leave me not a moment of leisure for these little sing-song matters. In a word, I am a citizen of the world. I know nothing of this thing called love." So saying, the swallow dived into the valley and was out of sight in a moment.

The prince remained disappointed and perplexed, but with his curiosity still more piqued by the difficulty of gratifying it. While in this mood his ancient guardian entered the tower. The prince advanced eagerly to meet him. "Oh, sage Ebon Bonabbon," cried he, "thou hast revealed to me much of the wisdom of the earth, but there is one thing of which I remain in utter ignorance, and would fain be informed."

"My prince has but to make the inquiry, and everything within the limited range of his servant's intellect is at his command."

"Tell me then, oh, most profound of sages, what is the nature of this thing called love?"

The sage Ebon Bonabbon was struck as with a thunder-bolt. He trembled and turned pale, and felt as if his head sat but loosely on his shoulders.

"What could suggest such a question to my prince—where could he have learned so idle a word?"

The prince led him to the window of the tower. "Listen, oh, Ebon Bonabbon!" said he. The sage listened. The nightingale sat in a thicket below the tower singing to his paramour, the rose; from every blossomed spray and tufted grove arose a strain of melody, and love—love—love, was still the unvarying theme. "Allah Achbar! God is great!" exclaimed the wise Bonabbon. "Who shall pretend to keep this secret from the hearts of men when even the birds of the air conspire to betray it?"

Then turning to Ahmed, "Oh, my prince," cried he, "shut thine ears to these seductive strains. Close thy mind against this dangerous knowledge. Know that this love is the cause of half the ills of wretched mortality. It is this which produces bitterness of strife between brethren and friends; which causes treacherous murder and desolating war. Care and sorrow, weary days and sleepless nights, are its attendants. It withers the bloom and blights the joys of youth, and brings on the ills and griefs of premature old age. Allah preserve thee, my prince, in total ignorance of this thing called love!"

The sage Ebon Bonabbon hastily retired, leaving the prince plunged in still deeper perplexity. It was in vain he attempted to dismiss the subject from his mind; it still continued uppermost in his thoughts, and teased and exhausted him with vain conjectures. "Surely," said he to himself as he listened to the tuneful strains of the birds, "there is no sorrow in those notes: everything seems tender-

ness and joy. If love be a cause of such wretchedness and strife, why are not these birds drooping in solitude, or tearing each other in pieces, instead of fluttering cheerfully about the groves, or sporting with each other among the flowers?"

He lay one morning on his couch meditating on this inexplicable matter. The window of his chamber was open to admit the soft morning breeze which came laden with the perfume of orange blossoms from the valley of the Darro. The voice of the nightingale was faintly heard, still chanting the wonted theme. As the prince was listening and sighing, there was a sudden rushing noise in the air; a beautiful dove, pursued by a hawk, darted in at the window and fell panting on the floor; while the pursuer, balked of his prey soared off to the mountains.

The prince took up the gasping bird, smoothed its feathers, and nestled it in his bosom. When he had soothed it by his caresses he put it in a golden cage, and offered it, with his own hands, the whitest and finest of wheat and the purest of water. The bird, however, refused food, and sat drooping and pining, and uttering piteous moans.

"What aileth thee?" said Ahmed. "Hast thou not everything thy heart can wish?"

"Alas, no!" replied the dove, "am I not separated from the partner of my heart—and that too in the happy spring-time—the very season of love?"

"Of love!" echoed Ahmed. "I pray thee, my pretty bird, canst thou then tell me what is love?"

"Too well can I, my prince. It is the torment of one, the felicity of two, the strife and enmity of three. It is a charm which draws two beings together, and unites them by delicious sympathies, making it happiness to be with each other, but misery to be apart. Is there no being to whom you are drawn by these ties of tender affection?"

"I like my old teacher, Ebon Bonabbon, better than any other being; but he is often tedious, and I occasionally feel myself happier without his society."

"That is not the sympathy I mean. I speak of love, the

great mystery and principle of life; the intoxicating revel of youth; the sober delight of age. Look forth, my prince, and behold how at this blessed season all nature is full of love. Every created being has its mate; the most insignificant bird sings to its paramour; the very beetle woos its lady beetle in the dust, and yon butterflies which you see fluttering high above the tower and toying in the air are happy in each other's love. Alas, my prince! hast thou spent so many of the precious days of youth without knowing anything of love! Is there no gentle being of another sex; no beautiful princess or lovely damsel who has ensnared your heart, and filled your bosom with a soft tumult of pleasing pains and tender wishes?"

"I begin to understand!" said the prince sighing. "Such a tumult I have more than once experienced without knowing the cause; and where should I seek for an object such as you describe in this dismal solitude?"

A little further conversation ensued, and the first amatory lesson of the prince was complete.

"Alas!" said he, "if love be indeed such a delight, and its interruption such a misery, Allah forbid that I should mar the joy of any of its votaries." He opened the cage, took out the dove, and, having fondly kissed it, carried it to the window. "Go, happy bird," said he, "rejoice with the partner of thy heart in the days of youth and springtime. Why should I make thee a fellow-prisoner in this dreary tower, where love can never enter?"

The dove flapped its wings in rapture, gave one vault into the air, and then swooped downward on whistling wings to the blooming bowers of the Darro.

The prince followed him with his eyes, and then gave way to bitter repining. The singing of the birds which once delighted him now added to his bitterness. Love! love! love! Alas, poor youth, he now understood the strain.

His eyes flashed fire when next he beheld the sage Bonabon. "Why hast thou kept me in this abject ignorance?" cried he. "Why has the great mystery and principle of life

been withheld from me, in which I find the meanest insect is so learned? Behold all nature is in a revel of delight. Every created being rejoices with its mate. This—this is the love about which I have sought instruction; why am I alone debarred its enjoyment? why has so much of my youth been wasted without a knowledge of its rapture?”

The sage Bonabbon saw that all further reserve was useless, for the prince had acquired the dangerous and forbidden knowledge. He revealed to him, therefore, the predictions of the astrologers, and the precautions that had been taken in his education to avert the threatened evils. “And now, my prince,” added he, “my life is in your hands. Let the king your father discover that you have learned the passion of love while under my guardianship, and my head must answer for it.”

The prince was as reasonable as most young men of his age, and easily listened to the remonstrances of his tutor, since nothing pleaded against them. Besides, he really was attached to the sage Bonabbon, and being as yet but theoretically acquainted with the passion of love, he consented to confine the knowledge of it to his own bosom, rather than endanger the head of the philosopher. His discretion was doomed, however, to be put to still further proofs. A few mornings afterward, as he was ruminating on the battlements of the tower, the dove which had been released by him came hovering in the air, and alighted fearlessly upon his shoulder.

The prince fondled it to his breast. “Happy bird,” said he, “who can fly, as it were, with the wings of the morning to the uttermost parts of the earth. Where hast thou been since we parted?”

“In a far country, my prince; from whence I bring you tidings in reward for my liberty. In the wide compass of my flight, which extends over plain and mountain, as I was soaring in the air, I beheld below me a delightful garden with all kinds of fruits and flowers. It was in a green meadow on the banks of a meandering stream, and in the

center of the garden was a stately palace. I alighted in one of the bowers to repose after my weary flight; on the green bank below me was a youthful princess in the very sweetness and bloom of her years. She was surrounded by female attendants, young like herself, who decked her with garlands and coronets of flowers; but no flower of field or garden could compare with her for loveliness. Here, however, she bloomed in secret, for the garden was surrounded by high walls, and no mortal man was permitted to enter. When I beheld this beauteous maid thus young, and innocent, and unspotted by the world, I thought here is the being formed by heaven to inspire my prince with love."

The description was as a spark of fire to the combustible heart of Ahmed; all the latent amorousness of his temperament had at once found an object, and he conceived an immeasurable passion for the princess. He wrote a letter couched in the most impassioned language, breathing his fervent devotion, but the unhappy thralldom of his person, which prevented him from seeking her out, and throwing himself at her feet. He added couplets of the most tender and moving eloquence, for he was a poet by nature and inspired by love. He addressed his letter, "To the unknown beauty, from the captive prince Ahmed," then perfuming it with musk and roses, he gave it to the dove.

"Away, trustiest of messengers," said he. "Fly over mountain, and valley, and river, and plain; rest not in bower nor set foot on earth until thou hast given this letter to the mistress of my heart."

The dove soared high in air, and taking his course, darted away in one undeviating direction. The prince followed him with his eye until he was a mere speck on a cloud, and gradually disappeared behind a mountain.

Day after day he watched for the return of the messenger of love; but he watched in vain. He began to accuse him of forgetfulness, when, toward sunset one evening, the faithful bird fluttered into his apartment, and, falling at his feet, expired. The arrow of some wanton archer had pierced his

breast, yet he had struggled with the lingerings of life to execute his mission. As the prince bent with grief over this gentle martyr to fidelity, he beheld a chain of pearls round his neck, attached to which, beneath his wing, was a small enameled picture. It represented a lovely princess in the very flower of her years. It was, doubtless, the unknown beauty of the garden; but who and where was she—how had she received his letter—and was this picture sent as a token of an approval of his passion? Unfortunately, the death of the faithful dove left everything in mystery and doubt.

The prince gazed on the picture till his eyes swam with tears. He pressed it to his lips and to his heart; he sat for hours contemplating it in an almost agony of tenderness. "Beautiful image!" said he. "Alas, thou art but an image. Yet thy dewy eyes beam tenderly upon me; those rosy lips look as though they would speak encouragement. Vain fancies! Have they not looked the same on some more happy rival? But where in this wide world shall I hope to find the original? Who knows what mountains, what realms may separate us? What adverse chances may intervene? Perhaps now, even now, lovers may be crowding around her, while I sit here, a prisoner in a tower, wasting my time in adoration of a painted shadow."

The resolution of Prince Ahmed was taken. "I will fly from this palace," said he, "which has become an odious prison, and, a pilgrim of love, will seek this unknown princess throughout the world."

To escape from the tower in the day, when every one was awake, might be a difficult matter; but at night the palace was slightly guarded, for no one apprehended any attempt of the kind from the prince, who had always been so passive in his captivity. How was he to guide himself, however, in his darkling flight, being ignorant of the country. He bethought him of the owl, who was accustomed to roam at night, and must know every by-lane and secret pass. Seeking him in his hermitage, he questioned him touching his

knowledge of the land. Upon this the owl put on a mighty self-important look.

"You must know, oh prince," said he, that we owls are of a very ancient and extensive family, though rather fallen to decay, and possess ruinous castles and palaces in all parts of Spain. There is scarcely a tower of the mountains, or fortress of the plains, or an old citadel of a city, but has some brother, or uncle, or cousin quartered in it; and in going the rounds to visit these my numerous kindred I have pryed into every nook and corner, and made myself acquainted with every secret of the land."

The prince was overjoyed to find the owl so deeply versed in topography, and now informed him, in confidence, of his tender passion and his intended elopement, urging him to be his companion and counselor.

"Go to!" said the owl, with a look of displeasure. "Am I a bird to engage in a love affair; I whose whole time is devoted to meditation and the moon!"

"Be not offended, most solemn owl!" replied the prince. "Abstract thyself for a time from meditation and the moon, and aid me in my flight, and thou shalt have whatever heart can wish."

"I have that already," said the owl. "A few mice are sufficient for my frugal table, and this hole in the wall is spacious enough for my studies, and what more does a philosopher like myself desire?"

"Bethink thee, most wise owl, that while moping in thy cell and gazing at the moon all thy talents are lost to the world. I shall one day be a sovereign prince, and may advance thee to some post of honor and dignity."

The owl, though a philosopher and above the ordinary wants of life, was not above ambition, so he was finally prevailed upon to elope with the prince, and be his guide and Mentor in his pilgrimage.

The plans of a lover are promptly executed. The prince collected all his jewels and concealed them about his person as traveling funds. That very night he lowered himself by

his scarf from a balcony of the tower, clambered over the outer walls of the Generaliffe, and, guided by the owl, made good his escape before morning to the mountains.

He now held a council with his Mentor as to his future course.

"Might I advise," said the owl, "I would recommend you to repair to Seville. You must know that many years since I was on a visit to an uncle, an owl of great dignity and power, who lived in a ruined wing of the Alcazar of that place. In my hoverings at night over the city I frequently remarked a light burning in a lonely tower. At length I alighted on the battlements and found it to proceed from the lamp of an Arabian magician. He was surrounded by his magic books, and on his shoulder was perched his familiar, an ancient raven, who had come with him from Egypt. I became acquainted with that raven, and owe to him a great part of the knowledge I possess. The magician is since dead, but the raven still inhabits the tower, for these birds are of wonderful long life. I would advise you, oh prince, to seek that raven, for he is a soothsayer and a conjurer, and deals in the black art, for which all ravens, and especially those of Egypt, are renowned."

The prince was struck with the wisdom of this advice, and accordingly bent his course toward Seville. He traveled only in the night, to accommodate his companion, and lay by during the day in some dark cavern or mouldering watch-tower, for the owl knew every hiding hole of the kind in the country, and had a most antiquarian taste for ruins.

At length one morning at daybreak they reached the city of Seville, where the owl, who hated the glare and bustle of crowded streets, halted without the gate, and took up his quarters in a hollow tree.

The prince entered the gate and readily found the magic tower, which rose above the houses of the city as a palm tree rises above the shrubs of the desert. It was, in fact, the same tower known at the present day as the Giralda, the famous Moorish tower of Seville.

The prince ascended by a great winding staircase to the summit of the tower, where he found the cabalistic raven, an old, mysterious, gray-headed bird, ragged in feather, with a film over one eye that gave him the glare of a specter. He was perched on one leg, with his head turned on one side, and poring with his remaining eye on a diagram described on the pavement.

The prince approached him with the awe and reverence naturally inspired by his venerable appearance and supernatural wisdom. "Pardon me, most ancient and darkly wise raven," exclaimed he, "if for a moment I interrupt those studies which are the wonder of the world. You behold before you a votary of love, who would fain seek counsel how to obtain the object of his passion."

"In other words," said the raven with a significant look, "you seek to try my skill in palmistry. Come, show me your hand, and let me decipher the mysterious lines of fortune."

"Excuse me," said the prince, "I come not to pry into the decrees of fate, which are hidden by Allah from the eyes of mortals. I am a pilgrim of love, and seek but to find a clew to the object of my pilgrimage."

"And can you be at any loss for an object in amorous Andalusia," said the old raven, leering upon him with his single eye. "Above all, can you be at a loss in wanton Seville, where black-eyed damsels dance the zambra under every orange grove?"

The prince blushed and was somewhat shocked at hearing an old bird, with one foot in the grave, talk thus loosely. "Believe me," said he, gravely, "I am on no such light and vagrant errand as thou dost insinuate. The black-eyed damsels of Andalusia who dance among the orange groves of the Guadalquivir, are as naught to me. I seek one unknown but immaculate beauty, the original of this picture, and I beseech thee, most potent raven, if it be within the scope of thy knowledge, or the reach of thy art, inform me where she may be found."

The gray-headed raven was rebuked by the gravity of the prince. "What know I," replied he dryly, "of youth and beauty? My visits are to the old and withered, not the young and fair. The harbinger of fate am I, who croak bodings of death from the chimney-top, and flap my wings at the sick man's window. You must seek elsewhere for tidings of your unknown beauty."

"And where am I to seek, if not among the sons of wisdom, versed in the book of destiny? A royal prince am I, fated by the stars and sent on a mysterious enterprise, on which may hang the destiny of empires."

When the raven heard that it was a matter of vast moment, in which the stars took interest, he changed his tone and manner, and listened with profound attention to the story of the prince. When it was concluded, he replied, "Touching this princess, I can give thee no information of myself, for my flight is not among gardens or around ladies' bowers; but hie thee to Cordova, seek the palm-tree of the great Abderahman, which stands in the court of the principal mosque; at the foot of it you will find a great traveler, who has visited all countries and courts, and been a favorite with queens and princesses. He will give you tidings of the object of your search."

"Many thanks for this precious information," said the prince. "Farewell, most venerable conjurer."

"Farewell, pilgrim of love," said the raven dryly, and again fell to pondering on the diagram.

The prince sallied forth from Seville, sought his fellow traveler the owl, who was still dozing in the hollow tree, and set off for Cordova.

He approached it along hanging gardens and orange and citron groves overlooking the fair valley of the Guadalquivir. When arrived at its gates the owl flew up to a dark hole in the wall, and the prince proceeded in quest of the palm-tree planted in days of yore by the great Abderahman. It stood in the midst of the great court of the mosque, towering from amid orange and cypress trees. Dervises and Faquirs were

seated in groups under the cloisters of the court, and many of the faithful were performing their ablutions at the fountains, before entering the mosque.

At the foot of the palm-tree was a crowd listening to the words of one who appeared to be talking with great volubility. This, said the prince to himself, must be the great traveler who is to give me tidings of the unknown princess. He mingled in the crowd, but was astonished to perceive that they were all listening to a parrot, who, with his bright green coat, pragmatical eye, and consequential top-knot, had the air of a bird on excellent terms with himself.

"How is this," said the prince to one of the bystanders, "that so many grave persons can be delighted with the garrulity of a chattering bird?"

"You know not of whom you speak," said the other; "this parrot is a descendant of the famous parrot of Persia, renowned for his story-telling talent. He has all the learning of the East at the tip of his tongue, and can quote poetry as fast as he can talk. He has visited various foreign courts, where he has been considered an oracle of erudition. He has been a universal favorite also with the fair sex, who have a vast admiration for erudite parrots that can quote poetry."

"Enough," said the prince, "I will have some private talk with this distinguished traveler."

He sought a private interview, and expounded the nature of his errand. He had scarcely mentioned it when the parrot burst into a fit of dry rickety laughter, that absolutely brought tears in his eyes. "Excuse my mirth," said he, "but the mere mention of love always sets me laughing."

The prince was shocked at this ill-timed merriment. "Is not love," said he, "the great mystery of nature—the secret principle of life—the universal bond of sympathy?"

"A fig's end!" cried the parrot, interrupting him. "Prithee where hast thou learned this sentimental jargon? Trust me, love is quite out of vogue; one never hears of it in the company of wits and people of refinement."

The prince sighed as he recalled the different language of

his friend the dove. But this parrot, thought he, has lived about courts; he affects the wit and the fine gentleman; he knows nothing of the thing called love.

Unwilling to provoke any more ridicule of the sentiment which filled his heart, he now directed his inquiries to the immediate purport of his visit.

"Tell me," said he, "most accomplished parrot, thou who hast everywhere been admitted to the most secret bowers of beauty, hast thou in the course of thy travels met with the original of this portrait?"

The parrot took the picture in his claw, turned his head from side to side, and examined it curiously with either eye. "Upon my honor," said he, "a very pretty face; very pretty. But then one sees so many pretty women in one's travels that one can hardly—but hold—bless me! now I look at it again—sure enough, this is the Princess Aldegonda: how could I forget one that is so prodigious a favorite with me?"

"The Princess Aldegonda!" echoed the prince, "and where is she to be found?"

"Softly—softly," said the parrot, "easier to be found than gained. She is the only daughter of the Christian king who reigns at Toledo, and is shut up from the world until her seventeenth birthday, on account of some prediction of those meddlesome fellows, the astrologers. You'll not get a sight of her, no mortal man can see her. I was admitted to her presence to entertain her, and I assure you, on the word of a parrot who has seen the world, I have conversed with much sillier princesses in my time."

"A word in confidence, my dear parrot," said the prince. "I am heir to a kingdom, and shall one day sit upon a throne. I see that you are a bird of parts and understand the world. Help me to gain possession of this princess and I will advance you to some distinguished post about court."

"With all my heart," said the parrot; "but let it be a sinecure if possible, for we wits have a great dislike to labor."

Arrangements were promptly made; the prince sallied forth from Cordova through the same gate by which he had

entered; called the owl down from the hole in the wall, introduced him to his new traveling companion as a brother scavant, and away they set off on their journey.

They traveled much more slowly than accorded with the impatience of the prince, but the parrot was accustomed to high life, and did not like to be disturbed early in the morning. The owl, on the other hand, was for sleeping at mid-day, and lost a great deal of time by his long siestas. His antiquarian taste also was in the way; for he insisted on pausing and inspecting every ruin, and had long legendary tales to tell about every old tower and castle in the country. The prince had supposed that he and the parrot, being both birds of learning, could delight in each other's society, but never had he been more mistaken. They were eternally bickering. The one was a wit, the other a philosopher. The parrot quoted poetry, was critical on new readings and eloquent on small points of erudition; the owl treated all such knowledge as trifling, and relished nothing but metaphysics. Then the parrot would sing songs and repeat bon mots, and crack jokes upon his solemn neighbor, and laugh outrageously at his own wit; all which the owl considered a grievous invasion of his dignity, and would scowl, and sulk, and swell, and sit silent for a whole day together.

The prince heeded not the wranglings of his companions, being wrapped up in the dreams of his own fancy, and the contemplation of the portrait of the beautiful princess. In this way they journeyed through the stern passes of the Sierra Morena, across the sunburned plains of La Mancha and Castile, and along the banks of the "Golden Tagus," which winds its wizard mazes over one-half of Spain and Portugal. At length, they came in sight of a strong city with walls and towers, built on a rocky promontory, round the foot of which the Tagus circled with brawling violence.

"Behold," exclaimed the owl, "the ancient and renowned city of Toledo; a city famous for its antiquities. Behold those venerable domes and towers, hoary with time, and

clothed with legendary grandeur; in which so many of my ancestors have meditated—”

“Pish,” cried the parrot, interrupting his solemn antiquarian rapture, “what have we to do with antiquities, and legends, and your ancestors? Behold, what is more to the purpose, behold the abode of youth and beauty—behold, at length, oh prince, the abode of your long sought princess.”

The prince looked in the direction indicated by the parrot, and beheld, in a delightful green meadow on the banks of the Tagus, a stately palace rising from amid the bowers of a delicious garden. It was just such a place as had been described by the dove as the residence of the original of the picture. He gazed at it with a throbbing heart: “Perhaps at this moment,” thought he, “the beautiful princess is sporting beneath those shady bowers, or pacing with delicate step those stately terraces, or reposing beneath those lofty roofs!” As he looked more narrowly, he perceived that the walls of the garden were of great height, so as to defy access, while numbers of armed guards patrolled around them.

The prince turned to the parrot. “Oh most accomplished of birds,” said he, “thou hast the gift of human speech. Hie thee to yon garden; seek the idol of my soul, and tell her that Prince Ahmed, a pilgrim of love, and guided by the stars, has arrived in quest of her on the flowery banks of the Tagus.”

The parrot, proud of his embassy, flew away to the garden, mounted above its lofty walls, and, after soaring for a time over the lawns and groves, alighted on the balcony of a pavilion that overhung the river. Here, looking in at the casement, he beheld the princess reclining on a couch, with her eyes fixed on a paper, while tears gently stole after each other down her pallid cheek.

Pluming his wings for a moment, adjusting his bright green coat, and elevating his top-knot, the parrot perched himself beside her with a gallant air; then assuming a tenderness of tone—

"Dry thy tears, most beautiful of princesses," said he, "I come to bring solace to thy heart."

The princess was startled on hearing a voice, but turning and seeing nothing but a little green-coated bird bobbing and bowing before her: "Alas! what solace canst thou yield," said she, "seeing thou art but a parrot!"

The parrot was nettled at the question. "I have consoled many beautiful ladies in my time," said he; "but let that pass. At present, I come ambassador from a royal prince. Know that Ahmed, the Prince of Granada, has arrived in quest of thee, and is encamped even now on the flowery banks of the Tagus."

The eyes of the beautiful princess sparkled at these words, even brighter than the diamonds in her coronet. "Oh sweetest of parrots," cried she, "joyful indeed are thy tidings; for I was faint, and weary, and sick almost unto death, with doubt of the constancy of Ahmed. Hie thee back, and tell him that the words of his letter are engraven in my heart, and his poetry has been the food of my soul. Tell him, however, that he must prepare to prove his love by force of arms; to-morrow is my seventeenth birthday, when the king, my father, holds a great tournament; several princes are to enter the lists, and my hand is to be the prize of the victor."

The parrot again took wing, and, rustling through the groves, flew back to where the prince awaited his return. The rapture of Ahmed on finding the original of his adored portrait, and finding her kind and true, can only be conceived by those favored mortals who have had the good fortune to realize day dreams and turn shadows into substance. Still there was one thing that alloyed his transport—this impending tournament. In fact, the banks of the Tagus were already glittering with arms, and resounding with trumpets of the various knights, who with proud retinues were prancing on toward Toledo, to attend the ceremonial. The same star that had controlled the destiny of the prince had governed that of the princess, and until her seventeenth birth-

day she had been shut up from the world, to guard her from the tender passion. The fame of her charms, however, had been enhanced rather than obscured by this seclusion. Several powerful princes had contended for her alliance, and her father, who was a king of wondrous shrewdness, to avoid making enemies by showing partiality, had referred them to the arbitrament of arms. Among the rival candidates were several renowned for strength and prowess. What a predicament for the unfortunate Ahmed, unprovided as he was with weapons, and unskilled in the exercises of chivalry. "Luckless prince that I am!" said he, "to have been brought up in seclusion, under the eye of a philosopher; of what avail are algebra and philosophy in affairs of love! alas, Ebon Bonabbon, why hast thou neglected to instruct me in the management of arms?" Upon this the owl broke silence, prefacing his harangue with a pious ejaculation, for he was a devout Mussulman:

"Allah Achbar! 'God is great,' " exclaimed he; "in His hands are all secret things, He alone governs the destiny of princes! Know, oh prince, that this land is full of mysteries, hidden from all but those who, like myself, can grope after knowledge in the dark. Know that in the neighboring mountains there is a cave, and in that cave there is an iron table, and on that table lies a suit of magic armor, and beside that table stands a spellbound steed, which have been shut up there for many generations."

The prince stared with wonder, while the owl, blinking his huge round eyes and erecting his horns, proceeded:

"Many years since, I accompanied my father to these parts on a tour of his estates, and we sojourned in that cave, and thus became I acquainted with the mystery. It is a tradition in our family, which I have heard from my grandfather when I was yet but a very little owlet, that this armor belonged to a Moorish magician, who took refuge in this cavern when Toledo was captured by the Christians, and died there, leaving his steed and weapons under a mystic spell, never to be used but by a Moslem, and by him only

from sunrise to midday. In that interval, whoever uses them, will overthrow every opponent."

"Enough, let us seek this cave," exclaimed Ahmed.

Guided by his legendary Mentor, the prince found the cavern, which was in one of the wildest recesses of those rocky cliffs which rise around Toledo; none but the mousing eye of an owl or an antiquary could have discovered the entrance to it. A sepulchral lamp of everlasting oil shed a solemn light through the place. On an iron table in the center of the cavern lay the magic armor, against it leaned the lance, and beside it stood an Arabian steed, caparisoned for the field but motionless as a statue. The armor was bright and unsullied, as it had gleamed in days of old; the steed in as good condition as if just from the pasture, and when Ahmed laid his hand upon his neck, he pawed the ground and gave a loud neigh of joy that shook the walls of the cavern. Thus provided with horse to ride and weapon to wear, the prince determined to defy the field at the impending tourney.

The eventful morning arrived. The lists for the combat were prepared in the Vega or plain just below the cliff-built walls of Toledo. Here were erected stages and galleries for the spectators, covered with rich tapestry and sheltered from the sun by silken awnings. All the beauties of the land were assembled in those galleries, while below pranced plumed knights with their pages and esquires, among whom figured conspicuously the princes who were to contend in the tourney. All the beauties of the land, however, were eclipsed, when the Princess Aldegonda appeared in the royal pavilion, and for the first time broke forth upon the gaze of an admiring world. A murmur of wonder ran through the crowd at her transcendent loveliness; and the princes who were candidates for her hand merely on the faith of her reported charms now felt tenfold ardor for the conflict.

The princess, however, had a troubled look. The color came and went from her cheek, and her eye wandered with

a restless and unsatisfied expression over the plumed throng of knights. The trumpets were about sounding for the encounter when a herald announced the arrival of a stranger knight, and Ahmed rode into the field. A steeled helmet studded with gems rose above his turban; his cuirass was embossed with gold; his scimiter and dagger were of the workmanship of Fay, and flamed with precious stones. A round shield was at his shoulder, and in his hand he bore the lance of charmed virtue. The caparison of his Arabian was richly embroidered, and swept the ground; and the proud animal pranced and snuffed the air, and neighed with joy at once more beholding the array of arms. The lofty and graceful demeanor of the prince struck every eye, and when his appellation was announced, "The pilgrim of love," a universal flutter and agitation prevailed among the fair dames in the galleries.

When Ahmed presented himself at the lists, however, they were closed against him; none but princes, he was told, were admitted to the contest. He declared his name and rank. Still worse, he was a Moslem, and could not engage in a tourney where the hand of a Christian princess was the prize.

The rival princes surrounded him with haughty and menacing aspects, and one of insolent demeanor and herculean frame sneered at his light and youthful form, and scoffed at his amorous appellation. The ire of the prince was roused; he defied his rival to the encounter. They took distance, wheeled, and charged; at the first touch of the magic lance the brawny scoffer was tilted from his saddle. Here the prince would have paused, but alas! he had to deal with a demoniac horse and armor: once in action, nothing could control them. The Arabian steed charged into the thickest of the throng: the lance overturned everything that presented; the gentle prince was carried pell-mell about the field, strewing it with high and low, gentle and simple, and grieving at his own involuntary exploits. The king stormed and raged at this outrage on his subjects and his guests. He



ENCHANTED ARMOR.

Irving, Vol. Two, p. 180

ordered out all his guards—they were unhorsed as fast as they came up. The king threw off his robes, grasped buckler and lance, and rode forth to awe the stranger with the presence of majesty itself. Alas, majesty fared no better than the vulgar; the steed and lance were no respecters of persons; to the dismay of Ahmed, he was borne full tilt against the king, and in a moment the royal heels were in the air, and the crown was rolling in the dust.

At this moment the sun reached the meridian; the magic spell resumed its power. The Arabian steed scoured across the plain, leaped the barrier, plunged into the Tagus, swam its raging current, bore the prince, breathless and amazed, to the cavern, and resumed his station like a statue beside the iron table. The prince dismounted right gladly, and replaced the armor, to abide the further decrees of fate. Then, seating himself in the cavern, he ruminated on the desperate state to which this bedeviled steed and armor had reduced him. Never should he dare to show his face at Toledo, after inflicting such disgrace upon its chivalry, and such an outrage on its king. What, too, would the princess think of so rude and riotous an achievement? Full of anxiety, he sent forth his winged messengers to gather tidings. The parrot resorted to all the public places and crowded resorts of the city, and soon returned with a world of gossip. All Toledo was in consternation. The princess had been borne off senseless to the palace; the tournament had ended in confusion; every one was talking of the sudden apparition, prodigious exploits, and strange disappearance of the Moslem knight. Some pronounced him a Moorish magician; others thought him a demon who had assumed a human shape; while others related traditions of enchanted warriors hidden in the caves of the mountains, and thought it might be one of these who had made a sudden irruption from his den. All agreed that no mere ordinary mortal could have wrought such wonders, or unhorsed such accomplished and stalwart Christian warriors.

The owl flew forth at night, and hovered about the dusky

city, perching on the roofs and chimneys. He then wheeled his flight up to the royal palace, which stood on the rocky summit of Toledo, and went prowling about its terraces and battlements, eavesdropping at every cranny, and glaring in with his big goggling eyes at every window where there was a light, so as to throw two or three maids of honor into fits. It was not until the gray dawn began to peer above the mountains that he returned from his mousing expedition, and related to the prince what he had seen.

"As I was prying about one of the loftiest towers of the palace," said he, "I beheld through a casement a beautiful princess. She was reclining on a couch, with attendants and physicians around her, but she would none of their ministry and relief. When they retired, I beheld her draw forth a letter from her bosom, and read, and kiss it, and give way to loud lamentations; at which, philosopher as I am, I could not but be greatly moved."

The tender heart of Ahmed was distressed at these tidings. "Too true were thy words, oh sage Ebon Bonabbon!" cried he. "Care and sorrow and sleepless nights are the lot of lovers. Allah preserve the princess from the blighting influence of this thing called love."

Further intelligence from Toledo corroborated the report of the owl. The city was a prey to uneasiness and alarm. The princess was conveyed to the highest tower of the palace, every avenue to which was strongly guarded. In the meantime, a devouring melancholy had seized upon her, of which no one could divine the cause. She refused food, and turned a deaf ear to every consolation. The most skillful physicians had essayed their art in vain; it was thought some magic spell had been practiced upon her, and the king made proclamation, declaring that whoever should effect her cure should receive the richest jewel in the royal treasury.

When the owl, who was dozing in a corner, heard of this proclamation, he rolled his large eyes and looked more mysterious than ever.

"Allah Achbar!" exclaimed he. "Happy the man that

shall effect that cure, should he but know what to choose from the royal treasury."

"What mean you, most reverend owl?" said Ahmed.

"Hearken, oh prince, to what I shall relate. We owls, you must know, are a learned body, and much given to dark and dusty research. During my late prowling at night about the domes and turrets of Toledo, I discovered a college of antiquarian owls, who hold their meetings in a great vaulted tower where the royal treasure is deposited. Here they were discussing the forms and inscriptions and designs of ancient gems and jewels, and of golden and silver vessels, heaped up in the treasury, the fashion of every country and age: but mostly they were interested about certain relics and talismans that have remained in the treasury since the time of Roderick the Goth. Among these was a box of shittim wood, secured by bands of steel of Oriental workmanship, and inscribed with mystic characters known only to the learned few. This box and its inscription had occupied the college for several sessions, and had caused much long and grave dispute. At the time of my visit, a very ancient owl, who had recently arrived from Egypt, was seated on the lid of the box lecturing upon the inscription, and proved from it that the coffer contained the silken carpet of the throne of Solomon the wise: which doubtless had been brought to Toledo by the Jews, who took refuge there after the downfall of Jerusalem."

When the owl had concluded his antiquarian harangue, the prince remained for a time absorbed in thought. "I have heard," said he, "from the sage Ebon Bonabbon, of the wonderful properties of that talisman, which disappeared at the fall of Jerusalem, and was supposed to be lost to mankind. Doubtless it remains a sealed mystery to the Christians of Toledo. If I can get possession of that carpet my fortune is secure."

The next day the prince laid aside his rich attire, and arrayed himself in the simple garb of an Arab of the desert. He dyed his complexion to a tawny hue, and no one could

have recognized in him the splendid warrior who had caused such admiration and dismay at the tournament. With staff in hand and scrip by his side, and a small pastoral reed, he repaired to Toledo, and presenting himself at the gate of the royal palace, announced himself as a candidate for the reward offered for the cure of the princess. The guards would have driven him away with blows: "What can a vagrant Arab likely thyself pretend to do," said they, "in a case where the most learned of the land have failed?" The king, however, overheard the tumult, and ordered the Arab to be brought into his presence.

"Most potent king," said Ahmed, "you behold before you a Bedouin Arab, the greater part of whose life has been passed in the solitudes of the desert. Those solitudes, it is well known, are the haunts of demons and evil spirits, who beset us poor shepherds in our lonely watchings, enter into and possess our flocks and herds, and sometimes render even the patient camel furious. Against these, our counter charm is music; and we have legendary airs handed down from generation to generation that we chant and pipe to cast forth these evil spirits. I am of a gifted line, and possess this power in its fullest force. If it be any evil influence of the kind that holds a spell over thy daughter, I pledge my head to free her from its sway."

The king, who was a man of understanding, and knew the wonderful secrets possessed by the Arabs, was inspired with hope by the confident language of the prince. He conducted him immediately to the lofty tower secured by several doors, in the summit of which was the chamber of the princess. The windows opened upon a terrace with balustrades, commanding a view over Toledo and all the surrounding country. The windows were darkened, for the princess lay within, a prey to a devouring grief that refused all alleviation.

The prince seated himself on the terrace, and performed several wild Arabian airs on his pastoral pipe, which he had learned from his attendants in the Generaliffe at Granada.

The princess continued insensible, and the doctors, who were present, shook their heads, and smiled with incredibility and contempt. At length the prince laid aside the reed, and, to a simple melody, chanted the amatory verses of the letter which had declared his passion.

The princess recognized the strain. A fluttering joy stole to her heart; she raised her head and listened; tears rushed to her eyes and streamed down her cheeks; her bosom rose and fell with a tumult of emotions. She would have asked for the minstrel to be brought into her presence, but maiden coyness held her silent. The king read her wishes, and at his command Ahmed was conducted into the chamber. The lovers were discreet; they but exchanged glances, yet those glances spoke volumes. Never was triumph of music more complete. The rose had returned to the soft cheek of the princess, the freshness to her lip, and the dewy light to her languishing eye.

All the physicians present stared at each other with astonishment. The king regarded the Arab minstrel with admiration, mixed with awe. "Wonderful youth," exclaimed he, "thou shalt henceforth be the first physician of my court, and no other prescription will I take but thy melody. For the present, receive thy reward, the most precious jewel in my treasury."

"Oh king," replied Ahmed, "I care not for silver, or gold, or precious stones. One relic hast thou in thy treasury, handed down from the Moslems who once owned Toledo. A box of sandal wood containing a silken carpet. Give me that box and I am content."

All present were surprised at the moderation of the Arab; and still more, when the box of sandal wood was brought and the carpet drawn forth. It was of fine green silk, covered with Hebrew and Chaldaic characters. The court physicians looked at each other, shrugged their shoulders, and smiled at the simplicity of this new practitioner, who could be content with so paltry a fee.

"This carpet," said the prince, "once covered the throne

of Solomon the wise; it is worthy of being placed beneath the feet of beauty."

So saying, he spread it on the terrace beneath an ottoman that had been brought forth for the princess; then seating himself at her feet—

"Who," said he, "shall counteract what is written in the book of fate? Behold the prediction of the astrologers verified. Know, oh king, that your daughter and I have long loved each other in secret. Behold in me the pilgrim of love."

These words were scarcely from his lips, when the carpet rose in the air, bearing off the prince and princess. The king and the physicians gazed after it with open mouths and straining eyes, until it became a little speck on the white bosom of a cloud, and then disappeared in the blue vault of heaven.

The king in a rage summoned his treasurer. "How is this," said he, "that thou hast suffered an infidel to get possession of such a talisman?"

"Alas! sire, we knew not its nature, nor could we decipher the inscription of the box. If it be indeed the carpet of the throne of the wise Solomon, it is possessed of magic power, and can transport its owner from place to place through the air."

The king assembled a mighty army, and set off for Granada in pursuit of the fugitives. His march was long and toilsome. Encamping in the Vega, he sent a herald to demand restitution of his daughter. The king himself came forth with all his court to meet him. In the king he beheld the Arab minstrel, for Ahmed had succeeded to the throne on the death of his father, and the beautiful Aldegonda was his sultana.

The Christian king was easily pacified when he found that his daughter was suffered to continue in her faith: not that he was particularly pious; but religion is always a point of pride and etiquette with princes. Instead of bloody battles, there was a succession of feasts and rejoicings; after

which the king returned well pleased to Toledo, and the youthful couple continued to reign as happily as wisely in the Alhambra.

It is proper to add that the owl and the parrot had severally followed the prince by easy stages to Granada: the former traveling by night, and stopping at the various hereditary possessions of his family; the latter figuring in the gay circles of every town and city on his route.

Ahmed gratefully requited the services which they had rendered him on his pilgrimage. He appointed the owl his prime minister; the parrot his master of ceremonies. It is needless to say that never was a realm more sagely administered or a court conducted with more exact punctilio.

THE LEGEND OF THE ROSE OF THE ALHAMBRA

OR

THE PAGE AND THE GERFALCON

FOR some time after the surrender of Granada by the Moors that delightful city was a frequent and favorite residence of the Spanish sovereigns, until they were frightened away by successive shocks of earthquakes, which toppled down various houses and made the old Moslem towers rock to their foundation.

Many, many years then rolled away, during which Granada was rarely honored by a royal guest. The palaces of the nobility remained silent and shut up; and the Alhambra, like a slighted beauty, sat in mournful desolation among her neglected gardens. The tower of the Infantas, once the residence of the three beautiful Moorish princesses, partook of the general desolation; and the spider spun her web athwart the gilded vault, and bats and owls nestled in those chambers that had been graced by the presence of Zayda, Zorayda,

and Zorahayda. The neglect of the tower may partly have been owing to some superstitious notions of the neighbors. It was rumored that the spirit of the youthful Zorahayda, who had perished in that tower, was often seen by moonlight seated beside the fountain in the hall, or moaning about the battlements, and that the notes of her silver lute would be heard at midnight by wayfarers passing along the glen.

At length, the city of Granada was once more enlivened by the royal presence. All the world knows that Philip V. was the first Bourbon that swayed the Spanish scepter. All the world knows that he married, in second nuptials, Elizabethta or Isabella (for they are the same), the beautiful princess of Parma; and all the world knows that by this chain of contingencies a French prince and an Italian princess were seated together on the Spanish throne. For the reception of this illustrious pair the Alhambra was repaired and fitted up with all possible expedition. The arrival of the court changed the whole aspect of the lately deserted place. The clangor of drum and trumpet, the tramp of steed about the avenues and outer court, the glitter of arms and display of banners about barbican and battlement, recalled the ancient and warlike glories of the fortress. A softer spirit, however, reigned within the royal palace. There was the rustling of robes, and the cautious tread and murmuring voice of reverential courtiers about the ante-chambers; a loitering of pages and maids of honor about the gardens, and the sound of music stealing from open casements.

Among those who attended in the train of the monarchs was a favorite page of the queen named Ruyz de Alarcon. To say that he was a favorite page of the queen was at once to speak his eulogium, for every one in the suite of the stately Elizabethta was chosen for grace, and beauty, and accomplishments. He was just turned of eighteen, light and little of form, and graceful as a young Antinous. To the queen, he was all deference and respect, yet he was at heart a roguish stripling, petted and spoiled by the ladies about the court, and experienced in the ways of women far beyond his years.

This loitering page was one morning rambling about the groves of the Generaliffe, which overlook the grounds of the Alhambra. He had taken with him for his amusement a favorite gerfalcon of the queen. In the course of his rambles, seeing a bird rising from a thicket, he unhooded the hawk and let him fly. The falcon towered high in the air, made a swoop at his quarry, but, missing it, soared away regardless of the calls of the page. The latter followed the truant bird with his eye in its capricious flight, until he saw it alight upon the battlements of a remote and lonely tower, in the outer wall of the Alhambra, built on the edge of a ravine that separated the royal fortress from the grounds of the Generaliffe. It was, in fact, the "tower of the Princesses."

The page descended into the ravine, and approached the tower, but it had no entrance from the glen, and its lofty height rendered any attempt to scale it fruitless. Seeking one of the gates of the fortress, therefore, he made a wide circuit to that side of the tower facing within the walls. A small garden inclosed by a trellis-work of reeds overhung with myrtle lay before the tower. Opening a wicket, the page passed between beds of flowers and thickets of roses to the door. It was closed and bolted. A crevice in the door gave him a peep into the interior. There was a small Moorish hall, with fretted walls, light marble columns, and an alabaster fountain surrounded with flowers. In the center hung a gilt cage containing a singing bird; beneath it, on a chair, lay a tortoise-shell cat among reels of silk and other articles of female labor, and a guitar, decorated with ribbons, leaned against the fountain.

Ruyz de Alarcon was struck with these traces of female taste and elegance in a lonely, and, as he had supposed, deserted tower. They reminded him of the tales of enchanted halls, current in the Alhambra; and the tortoise-shell cat might be some spellbound princess.

He knocked gently at the door—a beautiful face peeped out from a little window above, but was instantly with-

drawn. He waited, expecting that the door would be opened; but he waited in vain: no footstep was to be heard within, all was silent. Had his senses deceived him, or was this beautiful apparition the fairy of the tower? He knocked again, and more loudly. After a little while, the beaming face once more peeped forth: it was that of a blooming damsel of fifteen.

The page immediately doffed his plumed bonnet, and entreated in the most courteous accents to be permitted to ascend the tower in pursuit of his falcon.

"I dare not open the door, senor," replied the little damsel, blushing; "my aunt has forbidden it."

"I do beseech you, fair maid; it is the favorite falcon of the queen; I dare not return to the palace without it."

"Are you, then, one of the cavaliers of the court?"

"I am, fair maid; but I shall lose the queen's favor and my place if I lose this hawk."

"Santa Maria! It is against you cavaliers of the court that my aunt has charged me especially to bar the door."

"Against wicked cavaliers, doubtless; but I am none of those, but a simple, harmless page, who will be ruined and undone if you deny me this small request."

The heart of the little damsel was touched by the distress of the page. It was a thousand pities he should be ruined for the want of so trifling a boon. Surely, too, he could not be one of those dangerous beings whom her aunt had described as a species of cannibal, ever on the prowl to make prey of thoughtless damsels; he was gentle and modest, and stood so entreatingly with cap in hand, and looked so charming. The sly page saw that the garrison began to waver, and redoubled his entreaties in such moving terms that it was not in the nature of mortal maiden to deny him; so, the blushing little warder of the tower descended and opened the door with a trembling hand; and if the page had been charmed by a mere glimpse of her countenance from the window, he was ravished by the full-length portrait now revealed to him.

Her Andalusian bodice and trim basquina set off the round but delicate symmetry of her form, which was as yet scarce verging into womanhood. Her glossy hair was parted on her forehead with scrupulous exactness, and decorated with a fresh plucked rose, according to the universal custom of the country.

It is true, her complexion was tinged by the ardor of a southern sun, but it served to give richness to the mantling bloom of her cheek, and to heighten the luster of her melting eyes.

Ruyz de Alarcon beheld all this with a single glance, for it became him not to tarry; he merely murmured his acknowledgments, and then bounded lightly up the spiral staircase in quest of his falcon. He soon returned with the truant bird upon his fist. The damsel, in the meantime, had seated herself by the fountain in the hall, and was winding silk; but in her agitation she let fall the reel upon the pavement. The page sprang, picked it up, then dropping gracefully on one knee, presented it to her, but, seizing the hand extended to receive it, imprinted on it a kiss more fervent and devout than he had ever imprinted on the fair hand of his sovereign.

“Ave Maria! Senor!” exclaimed the damsel, blushing still deeper with confusion and surprise, for never before had she received such a salutation.

The modest page made a thousand apologies, assuring her it was the way at court of expressing the most profound homage and respect.

Her anger, if anger she felt, was easily pacified; but her agitation and embarrassment continued, and she sat blushing deeper and deeper, with her eyes cast down upon her work, entangling the silk which she attempted to wind.

The cunning page saw the confusion in the opposite camp, and would fain have profited by it, but the fine speeches he would have uttered died upon his lips; his attempts at gallantry were awkward and ineffectual; and, to his surprise, the adroit page who had figured with such grace and effrontery among the most knowing and experienced ladies of the

court, found himself awed and abashed in the presence of a simple damsel of fifteen.

In fact, the artless maiden, in her own modesty and innocence, had guardians more effectual than the bolts and bars prescribed by her vigilant aunt. Still, where is the female bosom proof against the first whisperings of love? The little damsel, with all her artlessness, instinctively comprehended all that the faltering tongue of the page failed to express, and her heart was fluttered at beholding, for the first time, a lover at her feet—and such a lover!

The diffidence of the page, though genuine, was short-lived, and he was recovering his usual ease and confidence, when a shrill voice was heard at a distance.

“My aunt is returning from mass!” cried the damsel in affright. “I pray you, senor, depart.”

“Not until you grant me that rose from your hair as a remembrance.”

She hastily untwisted the rose from her raven locks. “Take it,” cried she, agitated and blushing, “but pray begone.”

The page took the rose, and at the same time covered with kisses the fair hand that gave it. Then placing the flower in his bonnet, and taking the falcon upon his fist, he bounded off through the garden, bearing away with him the heart of the gentle Jacinta.

When the vigilant aunt arrived at the tower, she remarked the agitation of her niece, and an air of confusion in the hall; but a word of explanation sufficed. “A gerfalcon had pursued his prey into the hall.”

“Mercy on us! To think of a falcon flying into the tower. Did ever one hear of so saucy a hawk? Why, the very bird in the cage is not safe.”

The vigilant Fredegonda was one of the most wary of ancient spinsters. She had a becoming terror and distrust of what she denominated “the opposite sex,” which had gradually increased through a long life of celibacy. Not that the good lady had ever suffered from their wiles; nature having

set up a safeguard in her face, that forbade all trespass upon her premises; but ladies who have least cause to fear for themselves are most ready to keep a watch over their more tempting neighbors. The niece was the orphan of an officer who had fallen in the wars. She had been educated in a convent, and had recently been transferred from her sacred asylum to the immediate guardianship of her aunt, under whose overshadowing care she vegetated in obscurity, like an opening rose blooming beneath a briar. Nor, indeed, is this comparison entirely accidental, for to tell the truth her fresh and dawning beauty had caught the public eye, even in her seclusion, and, with that poetical turn common to the people of Andalusia, the peasantry of the neighborhood had given her the appellation of "The Rose of the Alhambra."

The wary aunt continued to keep a faithful watch over her tempting little niece as long as the court continued at Granada, and flattered herself that her vigilance had been successful. It is true, the good lady was now and then discomposed by the tinkling of guitars and chanting of love ditties from the moonlit groves beneath the tower, but she would exhort her niece to shut her ears against such idle minstrelsy, assuring her that it was one of the arts of the opposite sex, by which simple maids were often lured to their undoing. Alas, what chance with a simple maid has a dry lecture against a moonlight serenade!

At length King Philip cut short his sojourn at Granada and suddenly departed with all his train. The vigilant Fredegonda watched the royal pageant as it issued forth from the gate of Justice, and descended the great avenue leading to the city. When the last banner disappeared from her sight, she returned exulting to her tower, for all her cares were over. To her surprise, a light Arabian steed pawed the ground at the wicket gate of the garden—to her horror she saw, through the thickets of roses, a youth, in gayly embroidered dress, at the feet of her niece. At the sound of her footsteps he gave a tender adieu, bounded

lightly over the barrier of reeds and myrtles, sprang upon his horse, and was out of sight in an instant.

The tender Jacinta, in the agony of her grief, lost all thought of her aunt's displeasure. Throwing herself into her arms, she broke forth into sobs and tears.

"Ay di mi!" cried she, "he is gone! he is gone! and I shall never see him more."

"Gone! who is gone! what youth is this I saw at your feet?"

"A queen's page, aunt, who came to bid me farewell."

"A queen's page, child," echoed the vigilant Fredegonda faintly, "and when did you become acquainted with a queen's page?"

"The morning that the gerfalcon flew into the tower. It was the queen's gerfalcon, and he came in pursuit of it."

"Ah, silly, silly girl! know that there are no gerfalcons half so dangerous as these pranking pages, and it is precisely such simple birds as thee that they pounce upon."

The aunt was at first indignant at learning that, in despite of her boasted vigilance, a tender intercourse had been carried on by the youthful lovers almost beneath her eye; but when she found that her simple-hearted niece, though thus exposed, without the protection of bolt or bar, to all the machinations of the opposite sex, had come forth unsinged from the fiery ordeal, she consoled herself with the persuasion that it was owing to the chaste and cautious maxims in which she had, as it were, steeped her to the very lips.

While the aunt laid this soothing unction to her pride, the niece treasured up the oft-repeated vows of fidelity of the page. But what is the love of restless, roving man? a vagrant stream that dallies for a time with each flower upon its banks, then passes on and leaves them all in tears.

Days, weeks, months elapsed, and nothing more was heard of the page. The pomegranate ripened, the vine yielded up its fruit, the autumnal rains descended in torrents from the mountains; the Sierra Nevada became covered with a snowy mantle, and wintry blasts howled through the halls

of the Alhambra: still he came not. The winter passed away. Again the genial spring burst forth with song, and blossoms, and balmy zephyr; the snows melted from the mountains, until none remained, but on the lofty summit of the Nevada, glistening through the sultry summer air: still nothing was heard of the forgetful page.

In the meantime, the poor little Jacinta grew pale and thoughtful. Her former occupations and amusements were abandoned; her silk lay entangled, her guitar unstrung, her flowers were neglected, the notes of her bird unheeded, and her eyes, once so bright, were dimmed with secret weeping. If any solitude could be devised to foster the passion of a lovelorn damsel, it would be such a place as the Alhambra, where everything seems disposed to produce tender and romantic reveries. It is a very Paradise for lovers; how hard then to be alone in such a Paradise; and not merely alone, but forsaken.

"Alas, silly child!" would the staid and immaculate Fredegonda say, when she found her niece in one of her desponding moods, "did I not warn thee against the wiles and deceptions of these men? What couldst thou expect, too, from one of a haughty and aspiring family, thou, an orphan, the descendant of a fallen and impoverished line; be assured, if the youth were true, his father, who is one of the proudest nobles about the court, would prohibit his union with one so humble and portionless as thou. Pluck up thy resolution, therefore, and drive these idle notions from thy mind."

The words of the immaculate Fredegonda only served to increase the melancholy of her niece, but she sought to indulge it in private. At a late hour one midsummer night, after her aunt had retired to rest, she remained alone in the hall of the tower, seated beside the alabaster fountain. It was here that the faithless page had first knelt and kissed her hand, it was here that he had often vowed eternal fidelity. The poor little damsel's heart was overladen with sad and tender recollections, her tears began to flow, and slowly fell, drop by drop, into the fountain. By degrees the crystal

water became agitated, and, bubble—bubble—bubble, boiled up, and was tossed about until a female figure, richly clad in Moorish robes, slowly rose to view.

Jacinta was so frightened that she fled from the hall and did not venture to return. The next morning she related what she had seen to her aunt, but the good lady treated it as a fantasy of her troubled mind, or supposed she had fallen asleep and dreamed beside the fountain. "Thou hast been thinking of the story of the three Moorish princesses that once inhabited the tower," continued she, "and it has entered into thy dreams."

"What story, aunt? I know nothing of it."

"Thou hast certainly heard of the three princesses, Zayda, Zorayda, and Zorahayda, who were confined in this tower by the king their father, and agreed to fly with three Christian cavaliers. The first two accomplished their escape, but the third failed in resolution and remained, and it is said died in this tower."

"I now recollect to have heard of it," said Jacinta, "and to have wept over the fate of the gentle Zorahayda."

"Thou mayst well weep over her fate," continued the aunt, "for the lover of Zorahayda was thy ancestor. He long bemoaned his Moorish love, but time cured him of his grief, and he married a Spanish lady, from whom thou art descended."

Jacinta ruminated upon these words. "That what I have seen is no fantasy of the brain," said she to herself, "I am confident. If indeed it be the sprite of the gentle Zorahayda, which I have heard lingers about this tower, of what should I be afraid? I'll watch by the fountain to-night, perhaps the visit will be repeated."

Toward midnight, when everything was quiet, she again took her seat in the hall. As the bell on the distant watch-tower of the Alhambra struck the midnight hour, the fountain was again agitated, and bubble—bubble—bubble, it tossed about the waters until the Moorish female again rose to view. She was young and beautiful; her dress was

rich with jewels, and in her hand she held a silver lute. Jacinta trembled and was faint, but was reassured by the soft and plaintive voice of the apparition, and the sweet expression of her pale melancholy countenance.

"Daughter of Mortality," said she, "what aileth thee? Why do thy tears trouble my fountain, and thy sighs and plaints disturb the quiet watches of the night?"

"I weep because of the faithlessness of man; and I bemoan my solitary and forsaken state."

"Take comfort, thy sorrows may yet have an end. Thou beholdest a Moorish princess, who, like thee, was unhappy in her love. A Christian knight, thy ancestor, won my heart, and would have borne me to his native land, and to the bosom of his church. I was a convert in my heart, but I lacked courage equal to my faith, and lingered till too late. For this, the evil genii are permitted to have power over me, and I remain enchanted in this tower until some pure Christian will deign to break the magic spell. Wilt thou undertake the task?"

"I will," replied the damsel, trembling.

"Come hither, then, and fear not: dip thy hand in the fountain, sprinkle the water over me and baptize me after the manner of thy faith; so shall the enchantment be dispelled, and my troubled spirit have repose."

The damsel advanced with faltering steps, dipped her hand in the fountain, collected water in the palm, and sprinkled it over the pale face of the phantom.

The latter smiled with ineffable benignity. She dropped her silver lute at the feet of Jacinta, crossed her white arms upon her bosom, and melted from sight, so that it seemed merely as if a shower of dewdrops had fallen into the fountain.

Jacinta retired from the hall filled with awe and wonder. She scarcely closed her eyes that night, but when she awoke at daybreak out of a troubled slumber, the whole appeared to her like a distempered dream. On descending into the hall, however, the truth of the vision was established; for,

beside the fountain she beheld the silver lute glittering in the morning sunshine.

She hastened to her aunt, related all that had befallen her, and called her to behold the lute as a testimonial of the reality of her story. If the good lady had any lingering doubts, they were removed when Jacinta touched the instrument, for she drew forth such ravishing tones as to thaw even the frigid bosom of the immaculate Fredegonda, that region of eternal winter, into a genial flow. Nothing but supernatural melody could have produced such an effect.

The extraordinary power of the lute became every day more and more apparent. The wayfarer passing by the tower was detained, and, as it were, spellbound, in breathless ecstasy. The very birds gathered in the neighboring trees, and, hushing their own strains, listened in charmed silence. Rumor soon spread the news abroad. The inhabitants of Granada thronged to the Alhambra to catch a few notes of the transcendent music that floated about the tower of Las Infantas.

The lovely little minstrel was at length drawn forth from her retreat. The rich and powerful of the land contended who should entertain and do honor to her; or, rather, who should secure the charms of her lute, to draw fashionable throngs to their saloons. Wherever she went, her vigilant aunt kept a dragon-watch at her elbow, awing the throngs of impassioned admirers who hung in raptures on her strains. The report of her wonderful powers spread from city to city: Malaga, Seville, Cordova, all became successively mad on the theme; nothing was talked of throughout Andalusia but the beautiful minstrel of the Alhambra. How could it be otherwise among a people so musical and gallant as the Andalusians, when the lute was magical in its powers, and the minstrel inspired by love.

While all Andalusia was thus music-mad, a different mood prevailed at the court of Spain. Philip V., as is well known, was a miserable hypochondriac, and subject to all kinds of fancies. Sometimes he would keep to his bed for

weeks together, groaning under imaginary complaints. At other times he would insist upon abdicating his throne, to the great annoyance of his royal spouse, who had a strong relish for the splendors of a court and the glories of a crown, and guided the scepter of her imbecile lord with an expert and steady hand.

Nothing was found to be so efficacious in dispelling the royal megrims as the powers of music; the queen took care, therefore, to have the best performers, both vocal and instrumental, at hand, and retained the famous Italian singer Farinelli about the court as a kind of royal physician.

At the moment we treat of, however, a freak had come over the mind of this sapient and illustrious Bourbon that surpassed all former vagaries. After a long spell of imaginary illness, which set all the strains of Farinelli, and the consultations of a whole orchestra of court fiddlers, at defiance, the monarch fairly, in idea, gave up the ghost, and considered himself absolutely dead.

This would have been harmless enough, and even convenient both to his queen and courtiers, had he been content to remain in the quietude befitting a dead man; but, to their annoyance, he insisted upon having the funeral ceremonies performed over him; and, to their inexpressible perplexity, began to grow impatient, and to revile bitterly at them for negligence and disrespect in leaving him unburied. What was to be done? To disobey the king's positive commands was monstrous in the eyes of the obsequious courtiers of a punctilious court—but to obey him, and bury him alive, would be downright regicide!

In the midst of this fearful dilemma a rumor reached the court of the female minstrel who was turning the brains of all Andalusia. The queen dispatched missives in all haste, to summon her to St. Ildefonso, where the court at that time resided.

Within a few days, as the queen with her maids of honor was walking in those stately gardens, intended, with their avenues, and terraces, and fountains, to eclipse the glories

of Versailles, the far-famed minstrel was conducted into her presence. The imperial Elizabetta gazed with surprise at the youthful and unpretending appearance of the little being that had set the world madding. She was in her picturesque Andalusian dress; her silver lute was in her hand, and she stood with modest and downcast eyes, but with a simplicity and freshness of beauty that still bespoke her "The Rose of the Alhambra."

As usual, she was accompanied by the ever-vigilant Fredegonda, who gave the whole history of her parentage and descent to the inquiring queen. If the stately Elizabetta had been interested by the appearance of Jacinta, she was still more pleased when she learned that she was of a meritorious, though impoverished line, and that her father had bravely fallen in the service of the crown. "If thy powers equal their renown," said she, "and thou canst cast forth this evil spirit that possesses thy sovereign, thy fortune shall henceforth be my care, and honors and wealth attend thee."

Impatient to make trial of her skill, she led the way at once to the apartment of the moody monarch. Jacinta followed with downcast eyes through files of guards and crowds of courtiers. They arrived at length at a great chamber hung in black. The windows were closed to exclude the light of day; a number of yellow wax tapers, in silver sconces, diffused a lugubrious light, and dimly revealed the figures of mutes in mourning dresses, and courtiers, who glided about with noiseless step and woebegone visage. On the midst of a funeral bed or bier, his hands folded on his breast, and the tip of his nose just visible, lay extended this would-be-buried monarch.

The queen entered the chamber in silence, and, pointing to a footstool in an obscure corner, beckoned to Jacinta to sit down and commence.

At first she touched her lute with a faltering hand, but gathering confidence and animation as she proceeded, drew forth such soft, aerial harmony that all present could scarce believe it mortal. As to the monarch, who had already con-

sidered himself in the world of spirits, he set it down for some angelic melody, or the music of the spheres. By degrees the theme was varied, and the voice of the minstrel accompanied the instrument. She poured forth one of the legendary ballads treating of the ancient glories of the Alhambra, and the achievements of the Moors. Her whole soul entered into the theme, for with the recollections of the Alhambra was associated the story of her love; the funereal chamber resounded with the animating strain. It entered into the gloomy heart of the monarch. He raised his head and gazed around; he sat up on his couch; his eye began to kindle; at length, leaping upon the floor, he called for sword and buckler.

The triumph of music, or rather of the enchanted lute, was complete; the demon of melancholy was cast forth; and, as it were, a dead man brought to life. The windows of the apartment were thrown open; the glorious effulgence of Spanish sunshine burst into the late lugubrious chamber; all eyes sought the lovely enchantress, but the lute had fallen from her hand; she had sunk upon the earth, and the next moment was clasped to the bosom of Ruyz de Alarcon.

The nuptials of the happy couple were shortly after celebrated with great splendor—but hold, I hear the reader ask how did Ruyz de Alarcon account for his long neglect? Oh—that was all owing to the opposition of a proud pragmatistical old father—besides, young people, who really like one another, soon come to an amicable understanding, and bury all past grievances whenever they meet.

But how was the proud pragmatistical old father reconciled to the match?

Oh, his scruples were easily overruled by a word or two from the queen—especially as dignities and rewards were showered upon the blooming favorite of royalty. Besides, the lute of Jacinta, you know, possessed a magic power, and could control the most stubborn head and hardest heart.

And what became of the enchanted lute?

Oh, that is the most curious matter of all, and plainly

proves the truth of all the story. That lute remained for some time in the family, but was purloined and carried off, as was supposed, by the great singer Farinelli, in pure jealousy. At his death it passed into other hands in Italy, who were ignorant of its mystic powers, and melting down the silver, transferred the strings to an old Cremona fiddle. The strings still retain something of their magic virtues. A word in the reader's ear, but let it go no further—that fiddle is now bewitching the whole world—it is the fiddle of Paganini!

THE VETERAN

AMONG the curious acquaintances I have made in my rambles about the fortress is a brave and battered old Colonel of Invalids, who is nestled like a hawk in one of the Moorish towers. His history, which he is fond of telling, is a tissue of those adventures, mishaps, and vicissitudes that render the life of almost every Spaniard of note as varied and whimsical as the pages of *Gil Blas*.

He was in America at twelve years of age, and reckons among the most signal and fortunate events of his life his having seen General Washington. Since then he has taken a part in all the wars of his country; he can speak experimentally of most of the prisons and dungeons of the Peninsula, has been lamed of one leg, crippled in his hand, and so cut up and carbonadoed that he is a kind of walking monument of the troubles of Spain, on which there is a scar for every battle and broil, as every year was notched upon the tree of Robinson Crusoe. The greatest misfortune of the brave old cavalier, however, appears to have been his having commanded at Malaga during a time of peril and confusion, and been made a general by the inhabitants to protect them from the invasion of the French.

This has entailed upon him a number of just claims upon government that I fear will employ him until his dying day

in writing and printing petitions and memorials, to the great disquiet of his mind, exhaustion of his purse and penance of his friends; not one of whom can visit him without having to listen to a mortal document of half an hour in length, and to carry away half a dozen pamphlets in his pocket. This, however, is the case throughout Spain: everywhere you meet with some worthy wight brooding in a corner, and nursing up some pet grievance and cherished wrong. Besides, a Spaniard who has a lawsuit, or a claim upon government, may be considered as furnished with employment for the remainder of his life.

I visited the veteran in his quarters in the upper part of the *Terre del Vino* or Wine Tower. His room was small but snug, and commanded a beautiful view of the Vega. It was arranged with a soldier's precision. Three muskets and a brace of pistols, all bright and shining, were suspended against the wall, with a saber and a cane hanging side by side, and above these two cocked hats, one for parade, and one for ordinary use. A small shelf, containing some half dozen books, formed his library, one of which, a little old mouldy volume of philosophical maxims, was his favorite reading. This he thumbed and pondered over day by day; applying every maxim to his own particular case, provided it had a little tinge of wholesome bitterness, and treated of the injustice of the world.

Yet he is social and kind-hearted, and, provided he can be diverted from his wrongs and his philosophy, is an entertaining companion. I like these old weather-beaten sons of fortune, and enjoy their rough campaigning anecdotes. In the course of my visit to the one in question, I learned some curious facts about an old military commander of the fortress, who seems to have resembled him in some respects, and to have had similar fortunes in the wars. These particulars have been augmented by inquiries among some of the old inhabitants of the place, particularly the father of Mateo Ximenes, of whose traditional stories the worthy I am about to introduce to the reader is a favorite hero.

THE GOVERNOR AND THE NOTARY

IN former times there ruled as governor of the Alhambra a doughty old cavalier, who, from having lost one arm in the wars, was commonly known by the name of El Gobernador Manco or the one-armed governor. He, in fact, prided himself upon being an old soldier, wore his mustachios curled up to his eyes, a pair of campaigning boots, and a toledo as long as a spit, with his pocket-handkerchief in the basket-hilt.

He was, moreover, exceedingly proud and punctilious, and tenacious of all his privileges and dignities. Under his sway, the immunities of the Alhambra, as a royal residence and domain, were rigidly exacted. No one was permitted to enter the fortress with firearms, or even with a sword or staff, unless he were of a certain rank, and every horseman was obliged to dismount at the gate and lead his horse by the bridle. Now, as the hill of the Alhambra rises from the very midst of the city of Granada, being, as it were, an excrescence of the capital, it must at all times be somewhat irksome to the captain-general who commands the province to have thus an imperium in imperio, a petty independent post, in the very core of his domains. It was rendered the more galling in the present instance, from the irritable jealousy of the old governor, that took fire on the least question of authority and jurisdiction, and from the loose vagrant character of the people that had gradually nestled themselves within the fortress as in a sanctuary, and from thence carried on a system of roguery and depredation at the expense of the honest inhabitants of the city. Thus there was a perpetual feud and heart-burning between the captain-general and the governor; the more virulent on the part of the latter, inasmuch as the smallest of two neighboring potentates is

a ways the most captious about his dignity. The stately palace of the captain-general stood in the Plaza Nueva, immediately at the foot of the hill of the Alhambra, and here was always a bustle and parade of guards, and domestics, and city functionaries. A beetling bastion of the fortress overlooked the palace and the public square in front of it; and on this bastion the old governor would occasionally strut backward and forward, with his toledo girded by his side, keeping a wary eye down upon his rival, like a hawk reconnoitering his quarry from his nest in a dry tree.

Whenever he descended into the city, it was in grand parade, on horseback, surrounded by his guards, or in his state coach, an ancient and unwieldy Spanish edifice of carved timber and gilt leather, drawn by eight mules, with running footmen, outriders, and lackeys, on which occasions he flattered himself he impressed every beholder with awe and admiration as vicegerent of the king, though the wits of Granada, particularly those who loitered about the palace of the captain-general, were apt to sneer at his petty parade, and, in allusion to the vagrant character of his subjects, to greet him with the appellation of "the King of the Beggars."

One of the most fruitful sources of dispute between these two doughty rivals was the right claimed by the governor to have all things passed free of duty through the city, that were intended for the use of himself or his garrison. By degrees, this privilege had given rise to extensive smuggling. A nest of contrabandistas took up their abode in the hovels of the fortress and the numerous caves in its vicinity, and drove a thriving business under the connivance of the soldiers of the garrison.

The vigilance of the captain-general was aroused. He consulted his legal adviser and factotum, a shrewd, meddlesome Escribano or notary, who rejoiced in an opportunity of perplexing the old potentate of the Alhambra, and involving him in a maze of legal subtilities. He advised the captain-general to insist upon the right of examining every convoy

passing through the gates of his city, and he penned a long letter for him, in vindication of the right. Governor Manco was a straightforward, cut-and-thrust old soldier, who hated an Escribano worse than the devil, and this one in particular worse than all other Escribanoes.

"What!" said he, curling up his mustachios fiercely, "does the captain-general set his man of the pen to practice confusions upon me? I'll let him see that an old soldier is not to be baffled by schoolcraft."

He seized his pen, and scrawled a short letter in a crabbed hand, in which, without deigning to enter into argument, he insisted on the right of transit free of search, and denounced vengeance on any custom-house officer who should lay his unhallowed hand on any convoy protected by the flag of the Alhambra.

While this question was agitated between the two pragmatical potentates, it so happened that a mule laden with supplies for the fortress arrived one day at the gate of Xenil, by which it was to traverse a suburb of the city on its way to the Alhambra. The convoy was headed by a testy old corporal, who had long served under the governor, and was a man after his own heart; as trusty and stanch as an old toledo blade. As they approached the gate of the city, the corporal placed the banner of the Alhambra on the pack saddle of the mule, and, drawing himself up to a perfect perpendicular, advanced with his head dressed to the front, but with the wary side glance of a cur passing through hostile grounds, and ready for a snap and a snarl.

"Who goes there?" said the sentinel at the gate.

"Soldier of the Alhambra," said the corporal, without turning his head.

"What have you in charge?"

"Provisions for the garrison."

"Proceed."

The corporal marched straight forward, followed by the convoy, but had not advanced many paces before a posse of custom-house officers rushed out of a small toll-house.

"Hallo, there!" cried the leader. "Muleteer, halt and open those packages."

The corporal wheeled round and drew himself up in battle array. "Respect the flag of the Alhambra," said he; "these things are for the governor."

"A fig for the governor, and a fig for his flag. Muleteer, halt, I say."

"Stop the convoy at your peril!" cried the corporal, cocking his musket. "Muleteer, proceed."

The muleteer gave his beast a hearty thwack, the custom-house officer sprang forward and seized the halter; whereupon the corporal leveled his piece and shot him dead.

The street was immediately in an uproar. The old corporal was seized, and after undergoing sundry kicks and cuffs, and cudgelings, which are generally given impromptu, by the mob in Spain, as a foretaste of the after penalties of the law, he was loaded with irons and conducted to the city prison; while his comrades were permitted to proceed with the convoy, after it had been well rummaged, to the Alhambra.

The old governor was in a towering passion when he heard of this insult to his flag and capture of his corporal. For a time he stormed about the Moorish halls, and vaped about the bastions, and looked down fire and sword upon the palace of the captain-general. Having vented the first ebullition of his wrath, he dispatched a message demanding the surrender of the corporal, as to him alone belonged the right of sitting in judgment on the offenses of those under his command. The captain-general, aided by the pen of the delighted Escribano, replied at great length, arguing that as the offense had been committed within the walls of his city, and against one of his civil officers, it was clearly within his proper jurisdiction. The governor rejoined by a repetition of his demand; the captain-general gave a surrejoinder of still greater length and legal acumen; the governor became hotter and more peremptory in his demands, and the captain-general cooler and more copious in his replies; until the old

lion-hearted soldier absolutely roared with fury, at being thus entangled in the meshes of legal controversy.

While the subtle Escribano was thus amusing himself at the expense of the governor, he was conducting the trial of the corporal; who, mewed up in a narrow dungeon of the prison, had merely a small grated window at which to show his iron-bound visage, and receive the consolations of his friends; a mountain of written testimony was diligently heaped up, according to Spanish form, by the indefatigable Escribano; the corporal was completely overwhelmed by it. He was convicted of murder and sentenced to be hanged.

It was in vain the governor sent down remonstrance and menace from the Alhambra. The fatal day was at hand, and the corporal was put *in capilla*, that is to say, in the chapel of the prison; as is always done with culprits the day before execution, that they may meditate on their approaching end and repent them of their sins.

Seeing things drawing to an extremity, the old governor determined to attend to the affair in person. For this purpose he ordered out his carriage of state, and, surrounded by his guards, rumbled down the avenue of the Alhambra into the city. Driving to the house of the Escribano, he summoned him to the portal.

The eye of the old governor gleamed like a coal at beholding the smirking man of the law advancing with an air of exultation.

"What is this I hear," cried he, "that you are about to put to death one of my soldiers?"

"All according to law—all in strict form of justice," said the self-sufficient Escribano, chuckling and rubbing his hands. "I can show your excellency the written testimony in the case."

"Fetch it hither," said the governor.

The Escribano bustled into his office, delighted with having another opportunity of displaying his ingenuity at the expense of the hard-headed veteran. He returned with a satchel full of papers, and began to read a long deposition

with professional volubility. By this time a crowd had collected, listening with outstretched necks and gaping mouths.

"Prithee, man, get into the carriage out of this pestilent throng, that I may the better hear thee," said the governor.

The Escribano entered the carriage, when, in a twinkling, the door was closed, the coachman smacked his whip, mules, carriage, guards and all dashed off at a thundering rate, leaving the crowd in gaping wonderment, nor did the governor pause until he had lodged his prey in one of the strongest dungeons of the Alhambra.

He then sent down a flag of truce in military style, proposing a cartel or exchange of prisoners, the corporal for the notary. The pride of the captain-general was piqued, he returned a contemptuous refusal, and forthwith caused a gallows, tall and strong, to be erected in the center of the Plaza Nueva, for the execution of the corporal.

"Oh, ho! is that the game?" said Governor Manco: he gave orders, and immediately a gibbet was reared on the verge of the great beetling bastion that overlooked the Plaza. "Now," said he, in a message to the captain-general, "hang my soldier when you please; but at the same time that he is swung off in the square, look up to see your Escribano dangling against the sky."

The captain-general was inflexible; troops were paraded in the square; the drums beat; the bell tolled; an immense multitude of amateurs had collected to behold the execution; on the other hand, the governor paraded his garrison on the bastion, and tolled the funeral dirge of the notary from the Torre de la Campana, or tower of the bell.

The notary's wife pressed through the crowd with a whole progeny of little embryo Escribanoes at her heels, and throwing herself at the feet of the captain-general, implored him not to sacrifice the life of her husband, and the welfare of herself and her numerous little ones, to a point of pride; "for you know the old governor too well," said she, "to doubt that he will put his threat in execution if you hang the soldier."

The captain-general was overpowered by her tears and lamentations and the clamors of her callow brood. The corporal was sent up to the Alhambra under a guard, in his gallows' garb, like a hooded friar; but with head erect and a face of iron. The *Escribano* was demanded in exchange, according to the cartel. The once bustling and self-sufficient man of the law was drawn forth from his dungeon, more dead than alive. All his flippancy and conceit had evaporated; his hair, it is said, had nearly turned gray with affright, and he had a downcast, dogged look, as if he still felt the halter round his neck.

The old governor stuck his one arm a-kimbo, and for a moment surveyed him with an iron smile. "Henceforth, my friend," said he, "moderate your zeal in hurrying others to the gallows; be not too certain of your own safety, even though you should have the law on your side; and, above all, take care how you play off your schoolcraft another time upon an old soldier."

GOVERNOR MANCO AND THE SOLDIER

WHEN Governor Manco, or the one-armed, kept up a show of military state in the Alhambra, he became nettled at the reproaches continually cast upon his fortress of being a nestling place of rogues and contrabandistas. On a sudden, the old potentate determined on reform, and setting vigorously to work, ejected whole nests of vagabonds out of the fortress, and the gypsy caves with which the surrounding hills are honeycombed. He sent out soldiers, also, to patrol the avenues and footpaths, with orders to take up all suspicious persons.

One bright summer morning, a patrol consisting of the testy old corporal who had distinguished himself in the affair of the notary, a trumpeter and two privates were seated under the garden wall of the Generaliffe, beside the road

which leads down from the mountain of the Sun, when they heard the tramp of a horse, and a male voice singing in rough, though not unmusical tones, an old Castilian campaigning song.

Presently they beheld a sturdy, sun-burned fellow, clad in the ragged garb of a foot-soldier, leading a powerful Arabian horse caparisoned in the ancient Morisco fashion.

Astonished at the sight of a strange soldier descending, steed in hand, from that solitary mountain, the corporal stepped forth and challenged him.

"Who goes there?"

"A friend."

"Who and what are you?"

"A poor soldier, just from the wars, with a cracked crown and empty purse for a reward."

By this time they were enabled to view him more narrowly. He had a black patch across his forehead, which, with a grizzled beard, added to a certain dare-devil cast of countenance, while a slight squint threw into the whole an occasional gleam of roguish good-humor.

Having answered the questions of the patrol, the soldier seemed to consider himself entitled to make others in return.

"May I ask," said he, "what city is this which I see at the foot of the hill?"

"What city!" cried the trumpeter; "come, that's too bad. Here's a fellow lurking about the mountain of the Sun, and demands the name of the great city of Granada."

"Granada! Madre de Dios! can it be possible!"

"Perhaps not!" rejoined the trumpeter, "and perhaps you have no idea that yonder are the towers of the Alhambra?"

"Son of a trumpet," replied the stranger, "do not trifle with me; if this be indeed the Alhambra, I have some strange matters to reveal to the governor."

"You will have an opportunity," said the corporal, "for we mean to take you before him."

By this time the trumpeter had seized the bridle of the

steed, the two privates had each secured an arm of the soldier, the corporal put himself in front, gave the word, "forward, march!" and away they marched for the Alhambra.

The sight of a ragged foot-soldier and a fine Arabian horse brought in captive by the patrol, attracted the attention of all the idlers of the fortress, and of those gossip groups that generally assemble about wells and fountains at early dawn. The wheel of the cistern paused in its rotations; the slipshod servant-maid stood gaping with pitcher in hand, as the corporal passed by with his prize. A motley train gradually gathered in the rear of the escort. Knowing nods, and winks, and conjectures passed from one to another. It is a deserter, said one; a contrabandista, said another; a bandalero, said a third, until it was affirmed that a captain of a desperate band of robbers had been captured by the prowess of the corporal and his patrol. "Well, well," said the old crones one to another, "captain or not, let him get out of the grasp of old Governor Manco if he can, though he is but one-handed."

Governor Manco was seated in one of the inner halls of the Alhambra, taking his morning's cup of chocolate in company with his confessor, a fat Franciscan friar from the neighboring convent. A demure, dark-eyed damsel of Malaga, the daughter of his housekeeper, was attending upon him.

The world hinted that the damsel, who, with all her demureness, was a sly, buxom baggage, had found out a soft spot in the iron heart of the old governor, and held complete control over him—but let that pass; the domestic affairs of these mighty potentates of the earth should not be too narrowly scrutinized.

When word was brought that a suspicious stranger had been taken lurking about the fortress, and was actually in the outer court, in durance of the corporal, waiting the pleasure of his excellency, the pride and stateliness of office swelled the bosom of the governor. Giving back his chocolate cup into the hands of the demure damsel, he called for his basket-

hilted sword, girded it to his side, twirled up his mustachios, took his seat in a large high backed chair, assumed a bitter and forbidding aspect, and ordered the prisoner into his presence. The soldier was brought in, still closely pinioned by his captors, and guarded by the corporal. He maintained, however, a resolute, self-confident air, and returned the sharp, scrutinizing look of the governor with an easy squint, which by no means pleased the punctilious old potentate.

"Well, culprit!" said the governor, after he had regarded him for a moment in silence, "what have you to say for yourself? who are you?"

"A soldier, just from the wars, who has brought away nothing but scars and bruises."

"A soldier? humph! a foot-soldier by your garb. I understand you have a fine Arabian horse. I presume you brought him too from the wars, besides your scars and bruises."

"May it please your excellency, I have something strange to tell about that horse. Indeed, I have one of the most wonderful things to relate—something too that concerns the security of this fortress, indeed of all Granada. But it is a matter to be imparted only to your private ear, or in presence of such only as are in your confidence."

The governor considered for a moment, and then directed the corporal and his men to withdraw, but to post themselves outside of the door, and be ready at call. "This holy friar," said he, "is my confessor, you may say anything in his presence—and this damsel," nodding toward the handmaid, who had loitered with an air of great curiosity, "this damsel is of great secrecy and discretion, and to be trusted with anything."

The soldier gave a glance between a squint and a leer at the demure handmaid. "I am perfectly willing," said he, "that the damsel should remain."

When all the rest had withdrawn, the soldier commenced his story. He was a fluent, smooth-tongued varlet, and had a command of language above his apparent rank.

"May it please your excellency," said he, "I am, as I before observed, a soldier, and have seen some hard service, but my term of enlistment being expired, I was discharged not long since from the army at Valladolid, and set out on foot for my native village in Andalusia. Yesterday evening the sun went down as I was traversing a great dry plain of old Castile."

"Hold!" cried the governor, "what is this you say? Old Castile is some two or three hundred miles from this."

"Even so," replied the soldier, coolly, "I told your excellency I had strange things to relate—but not more strange than true—as your excellency will find, if you will deign me a patient hearing."

"Proceed, culprit," said the governor, twirling up his mustachios.

"As the sun went down," continued the soldier, "I cast my eyes about in search of some quarters for the night, but far as my sight could reach there was no signs of habitation. I saw that I should have to make my bed on the naked plain, with my knapsack for a pillow; but your excellency is an old soldier, and knows that to one who has been in the wars, such a night's lodging is no great hardship."

The governor nodded assent, as he drew his pocket-handkerchief out of the basket-hilt of his sword, to drive away a fly that buzzed about his nose.

"Well, to make a long story short," continued the soldier, "I trudged forward for several miles, until I came to a bridge over a deep ravine, through which ran a little thread of water, almost dried up by the summer heat. At one end of the bridge was a Moorish tower, the upper part all in ruins, but a vault in the foundations quite entire. Here, thinks I, is a good place to make a halt. So I went down to the stream, took a hearty drink, for the water was pure and sweet, and I was parched with thirst, then opening my wallet, I took out an onion and a few crusts, which were all my provisions, and seating myself on a stone on the margin of the stream, began to make my supper; intending after-

ward to quarter myself for the night in the vault of the tower, and capital quarters they would have been for a campaigner just from the wars, as your excellency, who is an old soldier, may suppose."

"I have put up gladly with worse in my time," said the governor, returning his pocket-handkerchief into the hilt of his sword.

"While I was quietly crunching my crust," pursued the soldier, "I heard something stir within the vault; I listened: it was the tramp of a horse. By-and-by a man came forth from a door in the foundation of the tower, close by the water's edge, leading a powerful horse by the bridle. I could not well make out what he was by the starlight. It had a suspicious look to be lurking among the ruins of a tower in that wild solitary place. He might be a mere wayfarer like myself; he might be a contrabandista; he might be a bandalero! What of that—thank heaven and my poverty, I had nothing to lose—so I sat still and crunched my crusts.

"He led his horse to the water close by where I was sitting, so that I had a fair opportunity of reconnoitering him. To my surprise he was dressed in a Moorish garb, with a cuirass of steel, and a polished skullcap, that I distinguished by the reflection of the stars upon it. His horse, too, was harnessed in the Morisco fashion, with great shovel stirrups. He led him, as I said, to the side of the stream, into which the animal plunged his head almost to the eyes, and drank until I thought he would have burst.

"‘Comrade,’ said I, ‘your steed drinks well; it’s a good sign when a horse plunges his muzzle bravely into the water.’

"‘He may well drink,’ said the stranger, speaking with a Moorish accent; ‘it is a good year since he had his last draught.’

"‘By Santiago,’ said I, ‘that beats even the camels that I have seen in Africa. But come, you seem to be something of a soldier, won’t you sit down, and take part of a soldier’s

fare?"—In fact, I felt the want of a companion in this lonely place, and was willing to put up with an infidel. Besides, as your excellency well knows, a soldier is never very particular about the faith of his company, and soldiers of all countries are comrades on peaceable ground."

The governor again nodded assent.

"Well, as I was saying, I invited him to share my supper, such as it was, for I could not do less in common hospitality.

" 'I have no time to pause for meat or drink,' said he, 'I have a long journey to make before morning.'

" 'In which direction?' said I.

" 'Andalusia,' said he.

" 'Exactly my route,' said I. 'So, as you won't stop and eat with me, perhaps you'll let me mount and ride with you. I see your horse is of a powerful frame: I'll warrant he'll carry double.'

" 'Agreed,' said the trooper; and it would not have been civil and soldier-like to refuse, especially as I had offered to share my supper with him. So up he mounted, and up I mounted behind him.

" 'Hold fast,' said he, 'my steed goes like the wind.'

" 'Never fear me,' said I, and so off we set.

"From a walk the horse soon passed to a trot, from a trot to a gallop, and from a gallop to a harum-scarum scamper. It seemed as if rocks, trees, houses, everything, flew hurry-scurry behind us.

" 'What town is this?' said I.

" 'Segovia,' said he; and before the words were out of his mouth the towers of Segovia were out of sight. We swept up the Guadarama mountains, and down by the Escorial; and we skirted the walls of Madrid, and we scoured away across the plains of La Mancha. In this way we went up hill and down dale, by towns and cities all buried in deep sleep, and across mountains, and plains, and rivers, just glimmering in the starlight.

"To make a long story short, and not to fatigue your excellency, the trooper suddenly pulled up on the side of a

mountain. 'Here we are,' said he, 'at the end of our journey.'

"I looked about, but could see no signs of habitation: nothing but the mouth of a cavern: while I looked I saw multitudes of people in Moorish dresses, some on horseback, some on foot, arriving as if borne by the wind from all points of the compass, and hurrying into the mouth of the cavern like bees into a hive. Before I could ask a question, the trooper struck his long Moorish spurs into the horse's flanks, and dashed in with the throng. We passed along a steep winding way that descended into the very bowels of the mountain. As we pushed on, a light began to glimmer up by little and little, like the first glimmerings of day, but what caused it I could not discover. It grew stronger and stronger, and enabled me to see everything around. I now noticed, as we passed along, great caverns opening to the right and left, like halls in an arsenal. In some there were shields, and helmets, and cuirasses, and lances, and scimiters hanging against the walls; in others, there were great heaps of warlike munitions and camp equipage lying upon the ground.

"It would have done your excellency's heart good, being an old soldier, to have seen such grand provision for war. Then in other caverns there were long rows of horsemen, armed to the teeth, with lances raised and banners unfurled, all ready for the field; but they all sat motionless in their saddles like so many statues. In other halls were warriors sleeping on the ground beside their horses, and foot soldiers in groups, ready to fall into the ranks. All were in old-fashioned Moorish dresses and armor.

"Well, your excellency, to cut a long story short, we at length entered an immense cavern, or I might say palace, of grotto work, the walls of which seemed to be veined with gold and silver, and to sparkle with diamonds and sapphires, and all kinds of precious stones. At the upper end sat a Moorish king on a golden throne, with his nobles on each side, and a guard of African blacks with drawn scimiters.

All the crowd that continued to flock in, and amounted to thousands and thousands, passed one by one before his throne, each paying homage as he passed. Some of the multitude were dressed in magnificent robes, without stain or blemish, and sparkling with jewels; others in burnished and enameled armor; while others were in mouldered and mildewed garments, and in armor all battered and dented, and covered with rust.

"I had hitherto held my tongue, for your excellency well knows it is not for a soldier to ask many questions when on duty, but I could keep silence no longer.

" 'Prithee, comrade,' said I, 'what is the meaning of all this?'

" 'This,' said the trooper, 'is a great and powerful mystery. Know, oh Christian, that you see before you the court and army of Boabdil, the last king of Granada.'

" 'What is this you tell me!' cried I. 'Boabdil and his court were exiled from the land hundreds of years ago, and all died in Africa.'

" 'So it is recorded in your lying chronicles,' replied the Moor, 'but know that Boabdil and the warriors who made the last struggle for Granada were all shut up in this mountain by powerful enchantment. As to the king and army that marched forth from Granada at the time of the surrender, they were a mere phantom train, or spirits and demons, permitted to assume those shapes to deceive the Christian sovereigns. And furthermore let me tell you, friend, that all Spain is a country under the power of enchantment. There is not a mountain-cave, not a lonely watch-tower in the plains, nor ruined castle on the hills, but has some spellbound warriors sleeping from age to age within its vaults, until the sins are expiated for which Allah permitted the dominion to pass for a time out of the hands of the faithful. Once every year, on the eve of St. John, they are released from enchantment from sunset to sunrise, and permitted to repair here to pay homage to their sovereign; and the crowds which you beheld swarming into the cavern

are Moslem warriors from their haunts in all parts of Spain; for my own part, you saw the ruined tower of the bridge in old Castile, where I have now wintered and summered for many hundred years, and where I must be back again by daybreak. As to the battalions of horse and foot which you beheld drawn up in array in the neighboring caverns, they are the spellbound warriors of Granada. It is written in the book of fate, that when the enchantment is broken, Boabdil will descend from the mountains at the head of this army, resume his throne in the Alhambra and his sway of Granada, and gathering together the enchanted warriors from all parts of Spain, will reconquer the peninsula, and restore it to Moslem rule.'

" 'And when shall this happen?' said I.

" 'Allah alone knows. We had hoped the day of deliverance was at hand; but there reigns at present a vigilant governor in Alhambra, a stanch old soldier, the same called Governor Manco; while such a warrior holds command of the very outpost, and stands ready to check the first irruption from the mountain, I fear Boabdil and his soldiery must be content to rest upon their arms.' "

Here the governor raised himself somewhat perpendicularly, adjusted his sword, and twirled up his mustachios.

"To make a long story short, and not to fatigue your excellency, the trooper, having given me this account, dismounted from his steed.

" 'Tarry here,' said he, 'and guard my steed, while I go and bow the knee to Boabdil.' So saying, he strode away among the throng that pressed forward to the throne.

"What's to be done? thought I, when thus left to myself. Shall I wait here until this infidel returns to whisk me off on his goblin steed, the Lord knows where? or shall I make the most of my time and beat a retreat from this hobgoblin community?—A soldier's mind is soon made up, as your excellency well knows. As to the horse, he belonged to an avowed enemy of the faith and the realm, and was a fair prize according to the rules of war. So hoisting myself from

the crupper into the saddle, I turned the reins, struck the Moorish stirrups into the sides of the steed, and put him to make the best of his way out of the passage by which we had entered. As we scoured by the halls where the Moslem horsemen sat in motionless battalions, I thought I heard the clang of armor, and a hollow murmur of voices. I gave the steed another taste of the stirrups and doubled my speed. There was now a sound behind me like a rushing blast; I heard the clatter of a thousand hoofs; a countless throng overtook me; I was borne along in the press and hurled forth from the mouth of the cavern, while thousands of shadowy forms were swept off in every direction by the four winds of heaven.

"In the whirl and confusion of the scene, I was thrown from the saddle, and fell senseless to the earth. When I came to myself I was lying on the brow of a hill, with the Arabian steed standing beside me, for in falling my arm had slipped within the bridle, which, I presume, prevented his whisking off to old Castile.

"Your excellency may easily judge of my surprise on looking round to behold hedges of aloes and Indian figs, and other proofs of a southern climate, and see a great city below me with towers and palaces, and a grand cathedral. I descended the hill cautiously, leading my steed, for I was afraid to mount him again, lest he should play me some slippery trick. As I descended, I met with your patrol, who let me into the secret that it was Granada that lay before me; and that I was actually under the walls of the Alhambra, the fortress of the redoubted Governor Manco; the terror of all enchanted Moslems. When I heard this, I determined at once to seek your excellency, to inform you of all that I had seen, and to warn you of the perils that surround and undermine you, that you may take measures in time to guard your fortress, and the kingdom itself, from this intestine army that lurks in the very bowels of the land."

"And prithee, friend, you who are a veteran campaigner, and have seen so much service," said the gov-

error, "how would you advise me to go about to prevent this evil?"

"It is not for a humble private of the ranks," said the soldier modestly, "to pretend to instruct a commander of your excellency's sagacity; but it appears to me that your excellency might cause all the caves and entrances into the mountain to be walled up with solid mason-work, so that Boabdil and his army might be completely corked up in their subterranean habitation. If the good father, too," added the soldier, reverently bowing to the friar, and devoutly crossing himself, "would consecrate the barricadoes with his blessing, and put up a few crosses and relics, and images of saints, I think they might withstand all the power of infidel enchantments."

"They doubtless would be of great avail," said the friar.

The governor now placed his arm a-kimbo, with his hand resting on the hilt of his toledo, fixed his eye upon the soldier, and gently wagging his head from one side to the other:

"So, friend," said he, "then you really suppose I am to be gulled with this cock-and-bull story about enchanted mountains and enchanted Moors. Hark ye, culprit!—not another word.—An old soldier you may be, but you'll find you have an old soldier to deal with; and one not easily out-generated. Ho! guard there!—put this fellow in irons."

The demure handmaid would have put in a word in favor of the prisoner, but the governor silenced her with a look.

As they were pinioning the soldier, one of the guards felt something of bulk in his pocket, and drawing it forth, found a long leathern purse that appeared to be well filled. Holding it by one corner, he turned out the contents on the table before the governor, and never did freebooter's bag make more gorgeous delivery. Out tumbled rings and jewels, and rosaries of pearls, and sparkling diamond crosses, and a profusion of ancient golden coin, some of which fell jingling to the floor, and rolled away to the uttermost parts of the chamber.

For a time the sanctions of justice were suspended: there

was a universal scramble after the glittering fugitives. The governor alone, who was imbued with true Spanish pride, maintained his stately decorum, though his eye betrayed a little anxiety until the last coin and jewel was restored to the sack.

The friar was not so calm; his whole face glowed like a furnace, and his eyes twinkled and flashed at sight of the rosaries and crosses.

"Sacriligious wretch that thou art," exclaimed he, "what church or sanctuary hast thou been plundering of these sacred relics?"

"Neither one nor the other, holy father. If they be sacrilegious spoils, they must have been taken in times long past by the infidel trooper I have mentioned. I was just going to tell his excellency, when he interrupted me, that, on taking possession of the trooper's horse, I unhooked a leathern sack which hung at the saddle bow, and which, I presume, contained the plunder of his campaignings in days of old, when the Moors overran the country."

"Mighty well—at present you will make up your mind to take up your quarters in a chamber of the Vermilion towers, which, though not under a magic spell, will hold you as safe as any cave of your enchanted Moors."

"Your excellency will do as you think proper," said the prisoner coolly. "I shall be thankful to your excellency for any accommodation in the fortress. A soldier who has been in the wars, as your excellency well knows, is not particular about his lodgings; and provided I have a snug dungeon and regular rations, I shall manage to make myself comfortable. I would only entreat that, while your excellency is so careful about me, you would have an eye to your fortress, and think on the hint I dropped about stopping up the entrances to the mountain."

Here ended the scene. The prisoner was conducted to a strong dungeon in the Vermilion towers, the Arabian steed was led to his excellency's stable, and the trooper's sack was deposited in his excellency's strong box. To the latter, it is

true, the friar made some demur, questioning whether the sacred relics, which were evidently sacrilegious spoils, should not be placed in custody of the church; but as the governor was peremptory on the subject, and was absolute lord in the Alhambra, the friar discreetly dropped the discussion, but determined to convey intelligence of the fact to the church dignitaries in Granada.

To explain these prompt and rigid measures on the part of old Governor Manco, it is proper to observe that about this time the Alpuxarra mountains in the neighborhood of Granada were terribly infested by a gang of robbers, under the command of a daring chief, named Manuel Borasco, who were accustomed to prowl about the country, and even to enter the city in various disguises to gain intelligence of the departure of convoys of merchandise, or travelers with well-lined purses, whom they took care to waylay in distant and solitary passes of their road. These repeated and daring outrages had awakened the attention of government, and the commanders of the various posts had received instructions to be on the alert, and to take up all suspicious stragglers. Governor Manco was particularly zealous, in consequence of the various stigmas that had been cast upon his fortress, and he now doubted not that he had entrapped some formidable desperado of this gang.

In the meantime the story took wind, and became the talk not merely of the fortress, but of the whole city of Granada. It was said that the noted robber, Manuel Borasco, the terror of the Alpuxarras, had fallen into the clutches of old Governor Manco, and been cooped up by him in a dungeon of the Vermilion towers, and every one who had been robbed by him flocked to recognize the marauder. The Vermilion towers, as is well known, stand apart from the Alhambra, on a sister hill separated from the main fortress by the ravine, down which passes the main avenue. There were no outer walls, but a sentinel patrolled before the tower. The window of the chamber in which the soldier was confined was strongly grated, and looked upon a small esplanade. Here the good

folks of Granada repaired to gaze at him, as they would at a laughing hyena grinning through the cage of a menagerie. Nobody, however, recognized him for Manuel Borasco, for that terrible robber was noted for a ferocious physiognomy, and had by no means the good-humored squint of the prisoner. Visitors came not merely from the city, but from all parts of the country, but nobody knew him, and there began to be doubts in the minds of the common people whether there might not be some truth in his story. That Boabdil and his army were shut up in the mountain was an old tradition which many of the ancient inhabitants had heard from their fathers. Numbers went up to the mountain of the Sun, or rather of St. Elena, in search of the cave mentioned by the soldier; and saw and peeped into the deep dark pit, descending, no one knows how far, into the mountain, and which remains there to this day, the fabled entrance to the subterranean abode of Boabdil.

By degrees the soldier became popular with the common people. A freebooter of the mountains is by no means the opprobrious character in Spain that a robber is in any other country; on the contrary, he is a kind of chivalrous personage in the eyes of the lower classes. There is always a disposition, also, to cavil at the conduct of those in command, and many began to murmur at the high-handed measures of old Governor Manco, and to look upon the prisoner in the light of a martyr.

The soldier, moreover, was a merry, waggish fellow, that had a joke for every one who came near his window, and a soft speech for every female. He had procured an old guitar also, and would sit by his window and sing ballads and love-ditties to the delight of the women of the neighborhood, who would assemble on the esplanade in the evenings and dance boleros to his music. Having trimmed off his rough beard, his sunburned face found favor in the eyes of the fair, and the demure handmaid of the governor declared that his squint was perfectly irresistible. This kind-hearted damsel had, from the first, evinced a deep sympathy in his fortunes,

and having in vain tried to mollify the governor, had set to work privately to mitigate the rigor of his dispensations. Every day she brought the prisoner some crumbs of comfort which had fallen from the governor's table, or been abstracted from his larder, together with, now and then, a consoling bottle of choice Val de Peñas, or rich Malaga.

While this petty treason was going on in the very center of the old governor's citadel, a storm of open war was brewing up among his external foes. The circumstance of a bag of gold and jewels having been found upon the person of the supposed robber had been reported with many exaggerations in Granada. A question of territorial jurisdiction was immediately started by the governor's inveterate rival, the captain-general. He insisted that the prisoner had been captured without the precincts of the Alhambra, and within the rules of his authority. He demanded his body therefore and the spolia opima taken with him. Due information having been carried likewise by the friar to the grand Inquisitor, of the crosses, and the rosaries, and other relics contained in the bag, he claimed the culprit, as having been guilty of sacrilege, and insisted that his plunder was due to the church, and his body to the next Auto da Fe. The feuds ran high; the governor was furious, and swore, rather than surrender his captive, he would hang him up within the Alhambra, as a spy caught within the purlieus of the fortress.

The captain-general threatened to send a body of soldiers to transfer the prisoner from the Vermilion towers to the city. The grand Inquisitor was equally bent upon dispatching a number of the familiars of the holy office. Word was brought late at night to the governor of these machinations. "Let them come," said he, "they'll find me beforehand with them. He must rise bright and early who would take in an old soldier." He accordingly issued orders to have the prisoner removed at daybreak to the Donjon Keep within the walls of the Alhambra: "And d'ye hear, child," said he to his demure handmaid, "tap at my door, and wake me before cock-crowing, that I may see to the matter myself."

The day dawned, the cock crowed, but nobody tapped at the door of the governor. The sun rose high above the mountain-tops, and glittered in at his casement ere the governor was awakened from his morning dreams by his veteran corporal, who stood before him with terror stamped upon his iron visage.

"He's off! he's gone!" cried the corporal, gasping for breath.

"Who's off?—who's gone?"

"The soldier—the robber—the devil, for aught I know. His dungeon is empty, but the door locked. No one knows how he has escaped out of it."

"Who saw him last?"

"Your handmaid—she brought him his supper."

"Let her be called instantly."

Here was new matter of confusion. The chamber of the demure damsel was likewise empty; her bed had not been slept in; she had doubtless gone off with the culprit, as she had appeared, for some days past, to have frequent conversations with him.

This was wounding the old governor in a tender part, but he had scarce time to wince at it, when new misfortunes broke upon his view. On going into his cabinet, he found his strong box open, the leathern purse of the trooper abstracted, and with it a couple of corpulent bags of doubloons.

But how and which way had the fugitives escaped? A peasant, who lived in a cottage by the roadside leading up into the sierra, declared that he had heard the tramp of a powerful steed, just before daybreak, passing up into the mountains. He had looked out at his casement, and could just distinguish a horseman, with a female seated before him.

"Search the stables," cried Governor Manco. The stables were searched; all the horses were in their stalls excepting the Arabian steed. In his place was a stout cudgel tied to the manger, and on it a label bearing these words, "A gift to Governor Manco, from an old soldier."

LEGEND OF THE TWO DISCREET STATUES

THERE lived once, in a waste apartment of the Alhambra, a merry little fellow named Lope Sanchez, who worked in the gardens, and was as brisk and blithe as a grasshopper, singing all day long. He was the life and soul of the fortress; when his work was over, he would sit on one of the stone benches of the esplanade and strum his guitar, and sing long ditties about the Cid, and Bernardo del Carpio, and Fernando del Pulgar, and other Spanish heroes, for the amusement of the old soldiers of the fortress, or would strike up a merrier tune, and set the girls dancing boleros and fandangos.

Like most little men, Lope Sanchez had a strapping buxom dame for a wife, who could almost have put him in her pocket; but he lacked the usual poor man's lot—instead of ten children he had but one. This was a little black-eyed girl, about twelve years of age, named Sanchica, who was as merry as himself, and the delight of his heart. She played about him as he worked in the gardens, danced to his guitar as he sat in the shade, and ran as wild as a young fawn about the groves, and alleys, and ruined halls of the Alhambra.

It was now the eve of the blessed St. John, and the holy-day-loving gossips of the Alhambra, men, women, and children, went up at night to the mountain of the Sun, which rises above the Generaliffe, to keep their midsummer vigil on its level summit. It was a bright moonlight night, and all the mountains were gray and silvery, and the city, with its domes and spires, lay in shadows below, and the Vega was like a fairyland, with haunted streams gleaming among

its dusky groves. On the highest part of the mountain they lighted up a bale fire, according to an old custom of the country handed down from the Moors. The inhabitants of the surrounding country were keeping a similar vigil, and bale fires here and there in the Vega, and along the folds of the mountains, blazed up palely in the moonlight.

The evening was gayly passed in dancing to the guitar of Lope Sanchez, who was never so joyous as when on a holiday revel of the kind. While the dance was going on, the little Sanchica with some of her playmates sported among the ruins of an old Moorish fort that crowns the mountain, when, on gathering pebbles in the fosse, she found a small hand, curiously carved of jet, the fingers closed and the thumb firmly clasped upon them. Overjoyed with her good fortune, she ran to her mother with her prize. It immediately became a subject of sage speculation, and was eyed by some with superstitious distrust. "Throw it away," said one, "it is Moorish—depend upon it, there's mischief and witchcraft in it." "By no means," said another, "you may sell it for something to the jewelers of the Zacatin." In the midst of this discussion an old tawny soldier drew near, who had served in Africa, and was as swarthy as a Moor. He examined the hand with a knowing look. "I have seen things of this kind," said he, "among the Moors of Barbary. It is of great value to guard against the evil eye, and all kinds of spells and enchantments. I give you joy, friend Lope, this bodes good luck to your child." Upon hearing this, the wife of Lope Sanchez tied the little hand of jet to a ribbon, and hung it round the neck of her daughter.

The sight of this talisman called up all the favorite superstitions about the Moors. The dance was neglected, and they sat in groups on the ground, telling old legendary tales handed down from their ancestors. Some of their stories turned upon the wonders of the very mountain upon which they were seated, which is a famous hobgoblin region.

One ancient crone gave a long account of the subterranean palace in the bowels of that mountain, where Boabdil

and all his Moslem court are said to remain enchanted. "Among yonder ruins," said she, pointing to some crumbling walls and mounds of earth on a distant part of the mountain, "there is a deep black pit that goes down, down into the very heart of the mountain. For all the money in Granada I would not look down into it. Once upon a time, a poor man of the Alhambra, who tended goats upon this mountain, scrambled down into that pit after a kid that had fallen in. He came out again, all wild and staring, and told such things of what he had seen that every one thought his brain was turned. He raved for a day or two about hobgoblin Moors that had pursued him in the cavern, and could hardly be persuaded to drive his goats up again to the mountain. He did so at last, but, poor man, he never came down again. The neighbors found his goats browsing about the Moorish ruins, and his hat and mantle lying near the mouth of the pit, but he was never more heard of."

The little Sanchica listened with breathless attention to this story. She was of a curious nature, and felt immediately a great hankering to peep into this dangerous pit. Stealing away from her companions, she sought the distant ruins, and after groping for some time among them, came to a small hollow or basin, near the brow of the mountain, where it swept steeply down into the valley of the Darro. In the center of this basin yawned the mouth of the pit. Sanchica ventured to the verge and peeped in. All was black as pitch, and gave an idea of immeasurable depth. Her blood ran cold—she drew back—then peeped again—then would have run away—then took another peep—the very horror of the thing was delightful to her. At length she rolled a large stone and pushed it over the brink. For some time it fell in silence; then struck some rocky projection with a violent crash, then rebounded from side to side, rumbling and tumbling, with a noise like thunder, then made a final splash into water, far, far below, and all was again silent.

The silence, however, did not long continue. It seemed as if something had been awakened within this dreary abyss.

A murmuring sound gradually rose out of the pit like the hum and buzz of a beehive. It grew louder and louder: there was the confusion of voices as of a distant multitude, together with the faint din of arms, clash of cymbals, and clangor of trumpets, as if some army were marshaling for battle in the very bowels of the mountain.

The child drew off with silent awe, and hastened back to the place where she had left her parents and their companions. All were gone. The bale fire was expiring, and its last wreath of smoke curling up in the moonshine. The distant fires that had blazed along the mountains and in the Vega were all extinguished; everything seemed to have sunk to repose. Sanchica called her parents and some of her companions by name, but received no reply. She ran down the side of the mountain, and by the gardens of the Generaliffe, until she arrived in the alley of trees leading to the Alhambra, where she seated herself on a bench of a woody recess to recover breath. The bell from the watch-tower of the Alhambra told midnight. There was a deep tranquillity, as if all nature slept; excepting the low tinkling sound of an unseen stream that ran under the covert of the bushes. The breathing sweetness of the atmosphere was lulling her to sleep, when her eye was caught by something glittering at a distance, and, to her surprise, she beheld a long cavalcade of Moorish warriors pouring down the mountain side, and along the leafy avenues. Some were armed with lances and shields; others with scimiters and battle-axes, and with polished cuirasses that flashed in the moonbeams. Their horses pranced proudly, and champed upon the bit, but their tramp caused no more sound than if they had been shod with felt, and the riders were all as pale as death. Among them rode a beautiful lady with a crowned head and long golden locks entwined with pearls. The housings of her palfrey were of crimson velvet embroidered with gold, and swept the earth; but she rode all disconsolate, with eyes ever fixed upon the ground.

Then succeeded a train of courtiers magnificently arrayed

in robes and turbans of divers colors, and amid these, on a cream-colored charger, rode King Boabdil el Chico, in a royal mantle covered with jewels, and a crown sparkling with diamonds. The little Sanchica knew him by his yellow beard, and his resemblance to his portrait, which she had often seen in the picture gallery of the Generalife. She gazed in wonder and admiration at this royal pageant as it passed glistening among the trees, but though she knew these monarchs, and courtiers, and warriors, so pale and silent, were out of the common course of nature, and things of magic or enchantment, yet she looked on with a bold heart, such courage did she derive from the mystic talisman of the hand which was suspended about her neck.

The cavalcade having passed by, she rose and followed. It continued on to the great gate of Justice, which stood wide open; the old invalid sentinels on duty, lay on the stone benches of the Barbican, buried in profound and apparently charmed sleep, and the phantom pageant swept noiselessly by them with flaunting banner and triumphant state. Sanchica would have followed, but, to her surprise, she beheld an opening in the earth within the Barbican, leading down beneath the foundations of the tower. She entered for a little distance, and was encouraged to proceed by finding steps rudely hewn in the rock, and a vaulted passage here and there lighted up by a silver lamp, which, while it gave light, diffused likewise a grateful fragrance. Venturing on, she came at last to a great hall wrought out of the heart of the mountain, magnificently furnished in the Moorish style, and lighted up by silver and crystal lamps. Here on an ottoman sat an old man in Moorish dress, with a long white beard, nodding and dozing, with a staff in his hand, which seemed ever to be slipping from his grasp; while at a little distance sat a beautiful lady, in ancient Spanish dress, with a coronet all sparkling with diamonds, and her hair entwined with pearls, who was softly playing on a silver lyre. The little Sanchica now recollected a story she had heard among the old people of the Alhambra, concerning a Gothic princess

confined in the center of the mountain by an old Arabian magician, whom she kept bound up in magic sleep by the power of music.

The lady paused with surprise at seeing a mortal in that enchanted hall. "Is it the eve of the blessed St. John?" said she.

"It is," replied Sanchica.

"Then for one night the magic charm is suspended. Come hither, child, and fear not. I am a Christian like thyself, though bound here by enchantment. Touch my fetters with the talisman that hangs about thy neck, and for this night I shall be free."

So saying, she opened her robes and displayed a broad golden band round her waist, and a golden chain that fastened her to the ground. The child hesitated not to apply the little hand of jet to the golden band, and immediately the chain fell to the earth. At the sound the old man awoke, and began to rub his eyes, but the lady ran her fingers over the chords of the lyre, and again he fell into a slumber and began to nod, and his staff to falter in his hand. "Now," said the lady, "touch his staff with the talismanic hand of jet." The child did so, and it fell from his grasp, and he sunk in a deep sleep on the ottoman. The lady gently laid the silver lyre on the ottoman, leaning it against the head of the sleeping magician, then touching the chords until they vibrated in his ear, "O potent spirit of harmony," said she, "continue thus to hold his senses in thralldom till the return of day.—Now follow me, my child," continued she, "and thou shalt behold the Alhambra as it was in the days of its glory, for thou hast a magic talisman that reveals all enchantments." Sanchica followed the lady in silence. They passed up through the entrance of the cavern into the Barbican of the gate of Justice, and thence to the Plaza de las Algibes, or esplanade within the fortress. This was all filled with Moorish soldiery, horse and foot, marshaled in squadrons, with banners displayed. There were royal guards also at the portal, and rows of African blacks with drawn scimi-

ters. No one spoke a word, and Sanchica passed on fearlessly after her conductor. Her astonishment increased on entering the royal palace in which she had been reared. The broad moonshine lighted up all the halls, and courts, and gardens, almost as brightly as if it were day; but revealed a far different scene from that to which she was accustomed. The walls of the apartments were no longer stained and rent by time. Instead of cobwebs, they were now hung with rich silks of Damascus, and the gildings and arabesque paintings were restored to their original brilliancy and freshness. The halls, instead of being naked and unfurnished, were set out with divans and ottomans of the rarest stuffs, embroidered with pearls, and studded with precious gems, and all the fountains in the courts and gardens were playing.

The kitchens were again in full operation; cooks were busied preparing shadowy dishes, and roasting and boiling the phantoms of pullets and partridges; servants were hurrying to and fro with silver dishes heaped up with dainties, and arranging a delicious banquet. The Court of Lions was thronged with guards, and courtiers, and alfaquis, as in the old times of the Moors; and at the upper end, in the saloon of judgment, sat Boabdil on his throne, surrounded by his court, and swayed a shadowy scepter for the night.

Notwithstanding all this throng and seeming bustle, not a voice or footstep was to be heard; nothing interrupted the midnight silence but the plashing of the fountains. The little Sanchica followed her conductress in mute amazement about the palace, until they came to a portal opening to the vaulted passages beneath the great tower of Comares. On each side of the portal sat the figure of a nymph, wrought out of alabaster. Their heads were turned aside, and their regards fixed upon the same spot within the vault. The enchanted lady paused, and beckoned the child to her. "Here," said she, "is a great secret, which I will reveal to thee in reward for thy faith and courage. These discreet statues watch over a mighty treasure hidden in old times by a Moorish king. Tell thy father to search the spot on which their

eyes are fixed, and he will find what will make him richer than any man in Granada. Thy innocent hands alone, however, gifted as thou art also with the talisman, can remove the treasure. Bid thy father use it discreetly, and devote a part of it to the performance of daily masses for my deliverance from this unholy enchantment."

When the lady had spoken these words, she led the child onward to the little garden of Lindaraxa, which is hard by the vault of the statues. The moon trembled upon the waters of the solitary fountain in the center of the garden, and shed a tender light upon the orange and citron trees. The beautiful lady plucked a branch of myrtle and wreathed it round the head of the child. "Let this be a memento," said she, "of what I have revealed to thee, and a testimonial of its truth. My hour is come.—I must return to the enchanted hall; follow me not, lest evil befall thee; farewell, remember what I have said, and have masses performed for my deliverance." So saying, the lady entered a dark passage leading beneath the tower of Comares and was no longer to be seen.

The faint crowing of a cock was now heard from the cottages below the Alhambra, in the valley of the Darro, and a pale streak of light began to appear above the eastern mountains. A slight wind arose; there was a sound like the rustling of dry leaves through the courts and corridors, and door after door shut to with a jarring sound. Sanchica returned to the scenes she had so lately beheld thronged with the shadowy multitude, but Boabdil and his phantom court were gone.

The moon shone into empty halls and galleries, stripped of their transient splendor, stained and dilapidated by time, and hung with cobwebs; the bat flitted about in the uncertain light, and the frog croaked from the fish-pond.

Sanchica now made the best of her way to a remote staircase that led up to the humble apartment occupied by her family. The door as usual was open, for Lope Sanchez was too poor to need bolt or bar; she crept quietly to her pallet,

and, putting the myrtle wreath beneath her pillow, soon fell asleep.

In the morning she related all that had befallen her to her father. Lope Sanchez, however, treated the whole as a mere dream, and laughed at the child for her credulity. He went forth to his customary labors in the garden, but had not been there long when his little daughter came running to him almost breathless. "Father! father!" cried she, "behold the myrtle wreath which the Moorish lady bound round my head."

Lope Sanchez gazed with astonishment, for the stalk of the myrtle was of pure gold, and every leaf was a sparkling emerald! Being not much accustomed to precious stones, he was ignorant of the real value of the wreath, but he saw enough to convince him that it was something more substantial than the stuff that dreams are generally made of, and that at any rate the child had dreamed to some purpose. His first care was to enjoin the most absolute secrecy upon his daughter; in this respect, however, he was secure, for she had discretion far beyond her years or sex. He then repaired to the vault where stood the statues of the two alabaster nymphs. He remarked that their heads were turned from the portal, and that the regards of each were fixed upon the same point in the interior of the building. Lope Sanchez could not but admire this most discreet contrivance for guarding a secret. He drew a line from the eyes of the statues to the point of regard, made a private mark on the wall, and then retired.

All day, however, the mind of Lope Sanchez was distracted with a thousand cares. He could not help hovering within distant view of the two statues, and became nervous from the dread that the golden secret might be discovered. Every footstep that approached the place made him tremble. He would have given anything could he but turn the heads of the statues, forgetting that they had looked precisely in the same direction for some hundreds of years, without any person being the wiser. "A plague upon them," he would

say to himself, "they'll betray all. Did ever mortal hear of such a mode of guarding a secret!" Then, on hearing any one advance, he would steal off, as though his very lurking near the place would awaken suspicions. Then he would return cautiously, and peep from a distance to see if everything was secure, but the sight of the statues would again call forth his indignation. "Aye, there they stand," would he say, "always looking, and looking, and looking, just where they should not. Confound them! they are just like all their sex; if they have not tongues to tattle with, they'll be sure to do it with their eyes!"

At length, to his relief, the long anxious day drew to a close. The sound of footsteps was no longer heard in the echoing halls of the Alhambra; the last stranger passed the threshold, the great portal was barred and bolted, and the bat, and the frog, and the hooting owl gradually resumed their nightly vocations in the deserted palace.

Lope Sanchez waited, however, until the night was far advanced, before he ventured with his little daughter to the hall of the two nymphs. He found them looking as knowingly and mysteriously as ever at the secret place of deposit. "By your leaves, gentle ladies," thought Lope Sanchez as he passed between them, "I will relieve you from this charge that must have set so heavy in your minds for the last two or three centuries." He accordingly went to work at the part of the wall which he had marked, and in a little while laid open a concealed recess, in which stood two great jars of porcelain. He attempted to draw them forth, but they were immovable until touched by the innocent hand of his little daughter. With her aid he dislodged them from their niche, and found, to his great joy, that they were filled with pieces of Moorish gold, mingled with jewels and precious stones. Before daylight he managed to convey them to his chamber, and left the two guardian statues with their eyes still fixed on the vacant wall.

Lope Sanchez had thus on a sudden become a rich man, but riches, as usual, brought a world of cares to which he

had hitherto been a stranger. How was he to convey away his wealth with safety? How was he even to enter upon the enjoyment of it without awakening suspicion? Now too, for the first time in his life, the dread of robbers entered into his mind. He looked with terror at the insecurity of his habitation, and went to work to barricade the doors and windows; yet after all his precautions he could not sleep soundly. His usual gayety was at an end; he had no longer a joke or a song for his neighbors, and, in short, became the most miserable animal in the Alhambra. His old comrades remarked this alteration; pitied him heartily, and began to desert him, thinking he must be falling into want, and in danger of looking to them for assistance; little did they suspect that his only calamity was riches.

The wife of Lope Sanchez shared his anxiety; but then she had ghostly comfort. We ought before this to have mentioned that Lope being rather a light, inconsiderate little man, his wife was accustomed, in all grave matters, to seek the counsel and ministry of her confessor, Fray Simon, a sturdy, broad-shouldered, blue-bearded, bullet-headed friar of the neighboring convent of San Francisco, who was, in fact, the spiritual comforter of half the good wives of the neighborhood. He was, moreover, in great esteem among divers sisterhoods of nuns, who requited him for his ghostly services by frequent presents of those little dainties and knick-knacks manufactured in convents, such as delicate confections, sweet biscuits, and bottles of spiced cordials, found to be marvelous restoratives after fasts and vigils.

Fray Simon thrived in the exercise of his functions. His oily skin glistened in the sunshine as he toiled up the hill of the Alhambra on a sultry day. Yet notwithstanding his sleek condition, the knotted rope round his waist showed the austerity of his self-discipline; the multitude doffed their caps to him as a mirror of piety, and even the dogs scented the odor of sanctity that exhaled from his garments, and howled from their kennels as he passed.

Such was Fray Simon, the spiritual counselor of the

comely wife of Lope Sanchez, and as the father confessor is the domestic confidant of women in humble life in Spain, he was soon made acquainted, in great secrecy, with the story of the hidden treasure.

The friar opened eyes and mouth and crossed himself a dozen times at the news. After a moment's pause, "Daughter of my soul!" said he, "know that thy husband has committed a double sin, a sin against both state and church! The treasure he has thus seized upon for himself, being found in the royal domains, belongs, of course, to the crown; but being infidel wealth, rescued, as it were, from the very fangs of Satan, should be devoted to the church. Still, however, the matter may be accommodated. Bring hither the myrtle wreath."

When the good father beheld it, his eyes twinkled more than ever with admiration of the size and beauty of the emeralds. "This," said he, "being the first fruits of this discovery, should be dedicated to pious purposes. I will hang it up as a votive offering before the image of San Francisco in our chapel, and will earnestly pray to him, this very night, that your husband be permitted to remain in quiet possession of your wealth."

The good dame was delighted to make her peace with heaven at so cheap a rate, and the friar, putting the wreath under his mantle, departed with saintly steps toward his convent.

When Lope Sanchez came home, his wife told him what had passed. He was excessively provoked, for he lacked his wife's devotion, and had for some time groaned in secret at the domestic visitations of the friar. "Woman," said he, "what hast thou done! Thou hast put everything at hazard by thy tattling."

"What!" cried the good woman, "would you forbid my disburdening my conscience to my confessor?"

"No, wife! confess as many of your own sins as you please; but as to this money-digging, it is a sin of my own, and my conscience is very easy under the weight of it."

There was no use, however, in complaining; the secret was told, and, like water spilled on the sand, was not again to be gathered. Their only chance was, that the friar would be discreet.

The next day, while Lope Sanchez was abroad, there was a humble knocking at the door, and Fray Simon entered with meek and demure countenance.

"Daughter," said he, "I have prayed earnestly to San Francisco, and he has heard my prayer. In the dead of the night the saint appeared to me in a dream, but with a frowning aspect. 'Why,' said he, 'dost thou pray to me to dispense with this treasure of the Gentiles, when thou seest the poverty of my chapel? Go to the house of Lope Sanchez, crave in my name a portion of the Moorish gold to furnish two candlesticks for the main altar, and let him possess the residue in peace.'"

When the good woman heard of this vision, she crossed herself with awe, and going to the secret place where Lope had hidden the treasure, she filled a great leathern purse with pieces of Moorish gold, and gave it to the friar. The pious monk bestowed upon her in return benedictions enough, if paid by heaven, to enrich her race to the latest posterity; then slipping the purse into the sleeve of his habit, he folded his hands upon his breast and departed with an air of humble thankfulness.

When Lope Sanchez heard of this second donation to the church, he had wellnigh lost his senses. "Unfortunate man," cried he, "what will become of me? I shall be robbed by piecemeal; I shall be ruined and brought to beggary!"

It was with the utmost difficulty that his wife could pacify him by reminding him of the countless wealth that yet remained; and how considerate it was for San Francisco to rest contented with so very small a portion.

Unluckily, Fray Simon had a number of poor relations to be provided for, not to mention some half dozen sturdy, bullet-headed orphan children and destitute foundlings that he had taken under his care. He repeated his visits, therefore,

from day to day, with salutations on behalf of Saint Dominick, Saint Andrew, Saint James, until poor Lope was driven to despair, and found that, unless he got out of the reach of this holy friar, he should have to make peace offerings to every saint in the calendar. He determined, therefore, to pack up his remaining wealth, beat a secret retreat in the night, and make off to another part of the kingdom.

Full of his project, he bought a stout mule for the purpose, and tethered it in a gloomy vault, underneath the tower of the Seven Floors. The very place from whence the Bel-lado, or goblin horse without a head, is said to issue forth at midnight and to scour the streets of Granada, pursued by a pack of hell-hounds. Lope Sanchez had little faith in the story, but availed himself of the dread occasioned by it, knowing that no one would be likely to pry into the subterranean stable of the phantom steed. He sent off his family in the course of the day, with orders to wait for him at a distant village of the Vega. As the night advanced, he conveyed his treasure to the vault under the tower, and having loaded his mule, he led it forth, and cautiously descended the dusky avenue.

Honest Lope had taken his measures with the utmost secrecy, imparting them to no one but the faithful wife of his bosom. By some miraculous revelation, however, they became known to Fray Simon; the zealous friar beheld these infidel treasures on the point of slipping forever out of his grasp, and determined to have one more dash at them for the benefit of the church and San Francisco. Accordingly, when the bells had rung for animas, and all the Alhambra was quiet, he stole out of his convent, and, descending through the gate of Justice, concealed himself among the thickets of roses and laurels that border the great avenue. Here he remained, counting the quarters of hours as they were sounded on the bell of the watch-tower, and listening to the dreary hootings of owls, and the distant barking of dogs from the gypsy caverns.

At length, he heard the tramp of hoofs, and, through the

gloom of the overshadowing trees, imperfectly beheld a steed descending the avenue. The sturdy friar chuckled at the idea of the knowing turn he was about to serve honest Lope. Tucking up the skirts of his habit, and wriggling like a cat watching a mouse, he waited until his prey was directly before him, when darting forth from his leafy covert, and putting one hand on the shoulder, and the other on the crupper, he made a vault that would not have disgraced the most experienced master of equitation, and alighted well forked astride the steed. "Aha!" said the sturdy friar, "we shall now see who best understands the game."

He had scarce uttered the words, when the mule began to kick and rear and plunge, and then set off at full speed down the hill. The friar attempted to check him, but in vain. He bounded from rock to rock, and bush to bush; the friar's habit was torn to ribbons, and fluttered in the wind; his shaven poll received many a hard knock from the branches of the trees, and many a scratch from the brambles. To add to his terror and distress, he found a pack of seven hounds in full cry at his heels, and perceived, too late, that he was actually mounted upon the terrible Bellado!

Away they went, according to the ancient phrase, "pull devil, pull friar," down the great avenue, across the Plaza Nueva, along the Zacatin, around the Vivarambla—never did huntsman and hound make a more furious run, or more infernal uproar.

In vain did the friar invoke every saint in the calendar, and the holy Virgin into the bargain; every time he mentioned a name of the kind, it was like a fresh application of the spur and made the Bellado bound as high as a house. Through the remainder of the night was the unlucky Fray Simon carried hither and thither and whither he would not, until every bone in his body ached, and he suffered a loss of leather too grievous to be mentioned. At length, the crowing of a cock gave the signal of returning day. At the sound the goblin steed wheeled about and galloped back for his tower. Again he scoured the Vivarambla, the Zacatin, the

Plaza Nueva, and the avenue of fountains, the seven dogs yelling and barking, and leaping up, and snapping at the heels of the terrified friar. The first streak of day had just appeared as they reached the tower; here the goblin steed kicked up his heels, sent the friar a somerset through the air, plunged into the dark vault, followed by the infernal pack, and a profound silence succeeded to the late deafening clamor.

Was ever so diabolical a trick played off upon holy friar? A peasant going to his labors at early dawn found the unfortunate Fray Simon lying under a fig-tree at the foot of the tower, but so bruised and bedeviled that he could neither speak nor move. He was conveyed with all care and tenderness to his cell, and the story went that he had been waylaid and maltreated by robbers. A day or two elapsed before he recovered the use of his limbs: he consoled himself in the meantime with the thought that though the mule with the treasure had escaped him, he had previously had some rare pickings at the infidel spoils. His first care on being able to use his limbs was to search beneath his pallet, where he had secreted the myrtle wreath and the leathern pouches of gold, extracted from the piety of dame Sanchez. What was his dismay at finding the wreath, in effect, but a withered branch of myrtle, and the leathern pouches filled with sand and gravel!

Fray Simon, with all his chagrin, had the discretion to hold his tongue, for to betray the secret might draw on him the ridicule of the public, and the punishment of his superior; it was not until many years afterward, on his deathbed, that he revealed to his confessor his nocturnal ride on the Bellado.

Nothing was heard of Lope Sanchez for a long time after his disappearance from the Alhambra. His memory was always cherished as that of a merry companion, though it was feared, from the care and melancholy showed in his conduct shortly before his mysterious departure, that poverty and distress had driven him to some extremity. Some years afterward, one of his old companions, an invalid soldier, being at

Malaga, was knocked down and nearly run over by a coach and six. The carriage stopped; an old gentleman, magnificently dressed, with a bag-wig and sword, stepped out to assist the poor invalid. What was the astonishment of the latter to behold in this grand cavalier his old friend Lope Sanchez, who was actually celebrating the marriage of his daughter Sanchica with one of the first grandees in the land.

The carriage contained the bridal party. There was dame Sanchez, now grown as round as a barrel, and dressed out with feathers and jewels, and necklaces of pearls, and necklaces of diamonds, and rings on every finger, and altogether a finery of apparel that had not been seen since the days of Queen Sheba. The little Sanchica had now grown to be a woman, and for grace and beauty might have been mistaken for a duchess, if not a princess outright. The bridegroom sat beside her, rather a withered, spindle-shanked little man, but this only proved him to be of the true blue blood, a legitimate Spanish grandee being rarely above three cubits in stature. The match had been of the mother's making.

Riches had not spoiled the heart of honest Lope. He kept his old comrade with him for several days; feasted him like a king, took him to plays and bull-fights, and at length sent him away rejoicing, with a big bag of money for himself, and another to be distributed among his ancient messmates of the Alhambra.

Lope always gave out that a rich brother had died in America, and left him heir to a copper mine; but the shrewd gossips of the Alhambra insist that his wealth was all derived from his having discovered the secret guarded by the two marble nymphs of the Alhambra. It is remarked that these very discreet statues continue even unto the present day with their eyes fixed most significantly on the same part of the wall, which leads many to suppose there is still some hidden treasure remaining there, well worthy the attention of the enterprising traveler. Though others, and particularly all female visitors, regard them with great complacency, as lasting monuments of the fact that women can keep a secret.

MAHAMAD ABEN ALAHMAR

THE FOUNDER OF THE ALHAMBRA

HAVING dealt so freely in the marvelous legends of the Alhambra, I feel as if bound to give the reader a few facts concerning its sober history, or rather the history of those magnificent princes, its founder and finisher, to whom Europe is indebted for so beautiful and romantic an Oriental monument. To attain these facts I descended from this region of fancy and fiction, where everything is liable to take an imaginative tint, and carried my researches among the dusty tomes of the old Jesuits' library in the university. This once boasted repository of erudition is now a mere shadow of its former self, having been stripped of its manuscripts and rarest works by the French while masters of Granada. Still it contains, among many ponderous tomes of polemics of the Jesuit fathers, several curious tracts of Spanish literature, and, above all, a number of those antiquated, dusty, parchment-bound chronicles, for which I have a peculiar veneration.

In this old library I have passed many delightful hours of quiet, undisturbed, literary foraging, for the keys of the doors and bookcases were kindly intrusted to me, and I was left alone to rummage at my leisure—a rare indulgence in those sanctuaries of learning, which too often tantalize the thirsty student with the sight of sealed fountains of knowledge.

In the course of these visits I gleaned the following particulars concerning the historical characters in question.

The Moors of Granada regarded the Alhambra as a miracle of art, and had a tradition that the king who founded it dealt in magic, or at least was deeply versed in alchemy, by means of which he procured the immense sums of gold ex-

pended in its erection. A brief view of his reign will show the real secret of his wealth.

The name of this monarch, as inscribed on the walls of some of the apartments, was Aben Abd'allah (*i.e.*, the father of Abdallah), but he is commonly known in Moorish history as Mahamad Aben Alahmar (or Mahamad son of Alahmar), or simply Aben Alahmar, for the sake of brevity.

He was born in Arjona, in the year of the Hegira 591, of the Christian era 1195, of the noble family of the Beni Nasar, or children of Nasar, and no expense was spared by his parents to fit him for the high station to which the opulence and dignity of his family entitled him. The Saracens of Spain were greatly advanced in civilization. Every principal city was a seat of learning and the arts, so that it was easy to command the most enlightened instructors for a youth of rank and fortune. Aben Alahmar, when he arrived at manly years, was appointed Alcayde or governor of Arjona and Jaen, and gained great popularity by his benignity and justice. Some years afterward, on the death of Aben Hud, the Moorish power of Spain was broken into factions, and many places declared for Mahamad Aben Alahmar. Being of a sanguine spirit and lofty ambition, he seized upon the occasion, made a circuit through the country, and was everywhere received with acclamation. It was in the year 1238 that he entered Granada amid the enthusiastic shouts of the multitude. He was proclaimed king with every demonstration of joy, and soon became the head of the Moslems in Spain, being the first of the illustrious line of Beni Nasar that had sat upon the throne.

His reign was such as to render him a blessing to his subjects. He gave the command of his various cities to such as had distinguished themselves by valor and prudence, and who seemed most acceptable to the people. He organized a vigilant police, and established rigid rules for the administration of justice. The poor and the distressed always found ready admission to his presence, and he attended personally to their assistance and redress. He erected hospitals for the blind,

the aged, and infirm, and all those incapable of labor, and visited them frequently, not on set days, with pomp and form, so as to give time for everything to be put in order and every abuse concealed, but suddenly and unexpectedly, informing himself by actual observation and close inquiry of the treatment of the sick, and the conduct of those appointed to administer to their relief.

He founded schools and colleges, which he visited in the same manner, inspecting personally the instruction of the youth. He established butcheries and public ovens, that the people might be furnished with wholesome provisions at just and regular prices. He introduced abundant streams of water into the city, erecting baths and fountains, and constructing aqueducts and canals to irrigate and fertilize the Vega. By these means, prosperity and abundance prevailed in this beautiful city, its gates were thronged with commerce, and its warehouses filled with the luxuries and merchandise of every clime and country.

While Mahamad Aben Alahmar was ruling his fair domains thus wisely and prosperously, he was suddenly menaced by the horrors of war. The Christians at that time, profiting by the dismemberment of the Moslem power, were rapidly regaining their ancient territories. James the Conqueror had subjected all Valentia, and Ferdinand the Saint was carrying his victorious armies into Andalusia. The latter invested the city of Jaen, and swore not to raise his camp until he had gained possession of the place. Mahamad Aben Alahmar was conscious of the insufficiency of his means to carry on a war with the potent sovereign of Castile. Taking a sudden resolution, therefore, he repaired privately to the Christian camp, and made his unexpected appearance in the presence of King Ferdinand. "In me," said he, "you behold Mahamad, King of Granada. I confide in your good faith and put myself under your protection. Take all I possess and receive me as your vassal." So saying, he knelt and kissed the king's hand in token of submission.

King Ferdinand was touched by this instance of confiding

faith, and determined not to be outdone in generosity. He raised his late rival from the earth and embraced him as a friend, nor would he accept the wealth he offered, but received him as a vassal, leaving him sovereign of his dominions, on condition of paying a yearly tribute, attending the Cortes as one of the nobles of the empire, and serving him in war with a certain number of horsemen.

It was not long after this that Mahamad was called upon for his military services, to aid King Ferdinand in his famous siege of Seville. The Moorish king sallied forth with five hundred chosen horsemen of Granada, than whom none in the world knew better how to manage the steed or wield the lance. It was a melancholy and humiliating service, however, for they had to draw the sword against their brethren of the faith. Mahamad gained a melancholy distinction by his prowess in this renowned conquest, but more true honor by the humanity which he prevailed upon Ferdinand to introduce into the usages of war. When, in 1248, the famous city of Seville surrendered to the Castilian monarch, Mahamad returned sad and full of care to his dominions. He saw the gathering ills that menaced the Moslem cause, and uttered an ejaculation often used by him in moments of anxiety and trouble: "How straitened and wretched would be our life if our hope were not so spacious and extensive."*

When the melancholy conqueror approached his beloved Granada, the people thronged forth to see him with impatient joy, for they loved him as a benefactor. They had erected arches of triumph in honor of his martial exploits, and wherever he passed he was hailed with acclamations, as *El Galib*, or the conqueror; Mahamad shook his head when he heard the appellation, "*Wa le Galib ilé Alá*," exclaimed he: (there is no conqueror but God!) From that time forward, he adopted this exclamation as a motto. He inscribed it on an oblique band across his escutcheon, and it continued to be the motto of his descendants.

*"Que angoste y miserable seria nuestra vida, sino fuera tan dilatada y espaciosa nuestra espraneza!"

Mahamad had purchased peace by submission to the Christian yoke, but he knew that where the elements were so discordant, and the motives for hostility so deep and ancient, it could not be secure or permanent. Acting therefore upon an old maxim, "Arm thyself in peace, and clothe thyself in summer," he improved the present interval of tranquillity by fortifying his dominions and replenishing his arsenals, and by promoting those useful arts which give wealth and real power to an empire. He gave premiums and privileges to the best artisans; improved the breed of horses and other domestic animals; encouraged husbandry; and increased the natural fertility of the soil twofold by his protection, making the lonely valleys of his kingdom to bloom like gardens. He fostered also the growth and fabrication of silk, until the looms of Granada surpassed even those of Syria in the fineness and beauty of their productions. He, moreover, caused the mines of gold and silver, and other metals found in the mountainous regions of his dominions, to be diligently worked, and was the first King of Granada who struck money of gold and silver with his name, taking great care that the coins should be skillfully executed.

It was about this time, toward the middle of the thirteenth century, and just after his return from the siege of Seville, that he commenced the splendid palace of the Alhambra: superintending the building of it in person, mingling frequently among the artists and workmen, and directing their labors.

Though thus magnificent in his works, and great in his enterprises, he was simple in his person and moderate in his enjoyments. His dress was not merely void of splendor, but so plain as not to distinguish him from his subjects. His harem boasted but few beauties, and these he visited but seldom, though they were entertained with great magnificence. His wives were daughters of the principal nobles, and were treated by him as friends and rational companions; what is more, he managed to make them live as friends with one another.

He passed much of his time in his gardens; especially in those of the Alhambra, which he had stored with the rarest plants and the most beautiful and aromatic flowers. Here he delighted himself in reading histories, or in causing them to be read and related to him; and sometimes, in intervals of leisure, employed himself in the instruction of his three sons, for whom he had provided the most learned and virtuous masters.

As he had frankly and voluntarily offered himself a tributary vassal to Ferdinand, so he always remained loyal to his word, giving him repeated proofs of fidelity and attachment. When that renowned monarch died in Seville, in 1254, Mahamad Aben Alahmar sent ambassadors to condole with his successor, Alonzo X., and with them a gallant train of a hundred Moorish cavaliers of distinguished rank, who were to attend, each bearing a lighted taper round the royal bier, during the funeral ceremonies. This grand testimonial of respect was repeated by the Moslem monarch during the remainder of his life, on each anniversary of the death of King Ferdinando el Santo, when the hundred Moorish knights repaired from Granada to Seville, and took their stations with lighted tapers in the center of the sumptuous cathedral round the cenotaph of the illustrious deceased.

Mahamad Aben Alahmar retained his faculties and vigor to an advanced age. In his seventy-ninth year he took the field on horseback, accompanied by the flower of his chivalry, to resist an invasion of his territories. As the army sallied forth from Granada, one of the principal adalides or guides, who rode in the advance, accidentally broke his lance against the arch of the gate. The counselors of the king, alarmed by this circumstance, which was considered an evil omen, entreated him to return. Their supplications were in vain. The king persisted, and at noontide the omen, say the Moorish chroniclers, was fatally fulfilled. Mahamad was suddenly struck with illness, and had nearly fallen from his horse. He was placed on a litter, and borne back toward Granada, but his illness increased to such a degree that they

were obliged to pitch his tent in the Vega. His physicians were filled with consternation, not knowing what remedy to prescribe. In a few hours he died vomiting blood and in violent convulsions. The Castilian prince, Don Philip, brother of Alonzo X., was by his side when he expired. His body was embalmed, inclosed in a silver coffin, and buried in the Alhambra, in a sepulcher of precious marble, amid the unfeigned lamentations of his subjects, who bewailed him as a parent.

Such was the enlightened patriot prince, who founded the Alhambra, whose name remains emblazoned among its most delicate and graceful ornaments, and whose memory is calculated to inspire the loftiest associations in those who tread these fading scenes of his magnificence and glory. Though his undertakings were vast, and his expenditures immense, yet his treasury was always full; and this seeming contradiction gave rise to the story that he was versed in magic art and possessed of the secret for transmuting baser metals into gold.

Those who have attended to his domestic policy, as here set forth, will easily understand the natural magic and simple alchemy which made his ample treasury to overflow.

JUSEF ABUL HAGIAS

THE FINISHER OF THE ALHAMBRA

BENEATH the governor's apartment in the Alhambra is the royal Mosque, where the Moorish monarchs performed their private devotions. Though consecrated as a Catholic chapel, it still bears traces of its Moslem origin; the Saracenic columns with their gilded capitals, and the latticed gallery for the females of the harem, may yet be seen, and the es-cutcheons of the Moorish kings are mingled on the walls with those of the Castilian sovereigns.

In this consecrated place perished the illustrious Jusef Abul Hagias, the high-minded prince who completed the Alhambra, and who, for his virtues and endowments, deserves almost equal renown with its magnanimous founder. It is with pleasure I draw forth, from the obscurity in which it has too long remained, the name of another of those princes of a departed and almost forgotten race, who reigned in elegance and splendor in Andalusia, when all Europe was in comparative barbarism.

Jusef Abul Hagias (or, as it is sometimes written, Haxis) ascended the throne of Granada in the year 1333, and his personal appearance and mental qualities were such as to win all hearts, and to awaken anticipations of a beneficent and prosperous reign. He was of a noble presence and great bodily strength, united to manly beauty. His complexion was exceeding fair, and, according to the Arabian chroniclers, he heightened the gravity and majesty of his appearance by suffering his beard to grow to a dignified length and dyeing it black. He had an excellent memory, well stored with science and erudition; he was of a lively genius, and accounted the best poet of his time, and his manners were gentle, affable, and urbane.

Jusef possessed the courage common to all generous spirits, but his genius was more calculated for peace than war, and, though obliged to take up arms repeatedly in his time, he was generally unfortunate. He carried the benignity of his nature into warfare, prohibiting all wanton cruelty, and enjoining mercy and protection toward women and children, the aged and infirm, and all friars and persons of holy and recluse life. Among other ill-starred enterprises, he undertook a great campaign, in conjunction with the King of Morocco, against the kings of Castile and Portugal, but was defeated in the memorable battle of Salado; a disastrous reverse which had nearly proved a death blow to the Moslem power in Spain.

Jusef obtained a long truce after this defeat, during which time he devoted himself to the instruction of his people

and the improvement of their morals and manners. For this purpose he established schools in all the villages, with simple and uniform systems of education; he obliged every hamlet of more than twelve houses to have a mosque, and prohibited various abuses and indecorums that had been introduced into the ceremonies of religion and the festivals and public amusements of the people. He attended vigilantly to the police of the city, establishing nocturnal guards and patrols, and superintending all municipal concerns.

His attention was also directed toward finishing the great architectural works commenced by his predecessors, and erecting others on his own plans. The Alhambra, which had been founded by the good Aben Alahmar, was now completed. Jusef constructed the beautiful gate of Justice, forming the grand entrance to the fortress, which he finished in 1348. He likewise adorned many of the courts and halls of the palace, as may be seen by the inscriptions on the walls, in which his name repeatedly occurs. He built also the noble Alcazar, or citadel of Malaga; now unfortunately a mere mass of crumbling ruins, but which, probably, exhibited in its interior similar elegance and magnificence with the Alhambra.

The genius of a sovereign stamps a character upon his time. The nobles of Granada, imitating the elegant and graceful taste of Jusef, soon filled the city of Granada with magnificent palaces; the halls of which were paved in mosaic, the walls and ceilings wrought in fretwork, and delicately gilded and painted with azure, vermilion, and other brilliant colors, or minutely inlaid with cedar and other precious woods; specimens of which have survived in all their luster the lapse of several centuries.

Many of the houses had fountains, which threw up jets of water to refresh and cool the air. They had lofty towers also, of wood or stone, curiously carved and ornamented, and covered with plates of metal that glittered in the sun. Such was the refined and delicate taste in architecture that prevailed among this elegant people; insomuch that, to use

the beautiful simile of an Arabian writer, "Granada, in the days of Jusef, was as a silver vase filled with emeralds and jacinths."

One anecdote will be sufficient to show the magnanimity of this generous prince. The long truce which had succeeded the battle of Salado was at an end, and every effort of Jusef to renew it was in vain. His deadly foe, Alfonso XI. of Castile, took the field with great force, and laid siege to Gibraltar. Jusef reluctantly took up arms, and sent troops to the relief of the place; when, in the midst of his anxiety, he received tidings that his dreaded foe had suddenly fallen a victim to the plague. Instead of manifesting exultation on the occasion, Jusef called to mind the great qualities of the deceased, and was touched with a noble sorrow. "Alas!" cried he, "the world has lost one of its most excellent princes; a sovereign who knew how to honor merit, whether in friend or foe!"

The Spanish chroniclers themselves bear witness to this magnanimity. According to their accounts, the Moorish cavaliers partook of the sentiment of their king, and put on mourning for the death of Alfonso. Even those of Gibraltar, who had been so closely invested, when they knew that the hostile monarch lay dead in his camp, determined among themselves that no hostile movement should be made against the Christians.

The day on which the camp was broken up, and the army departed, bearing the corpse of Alfonso, the Moors issued in multitudes from Gibraltar, and stood mute and melancholy, watching the mournful pageant. The same reverence for the deceased was observed by all the Moorish commanders on the frontiers, who suffered the funeral train to pass in safety, bearing the corpse of the Christian sovereign from Gibraltar to Seville.*

* "Y los Moros que estaban en la villa y Castillo de Gibralta-despues que sopieron que el Rey Don Alonzo era muerto, order naron entresi que ninguno non fuesse osado de fazer ningun movimiento contra los

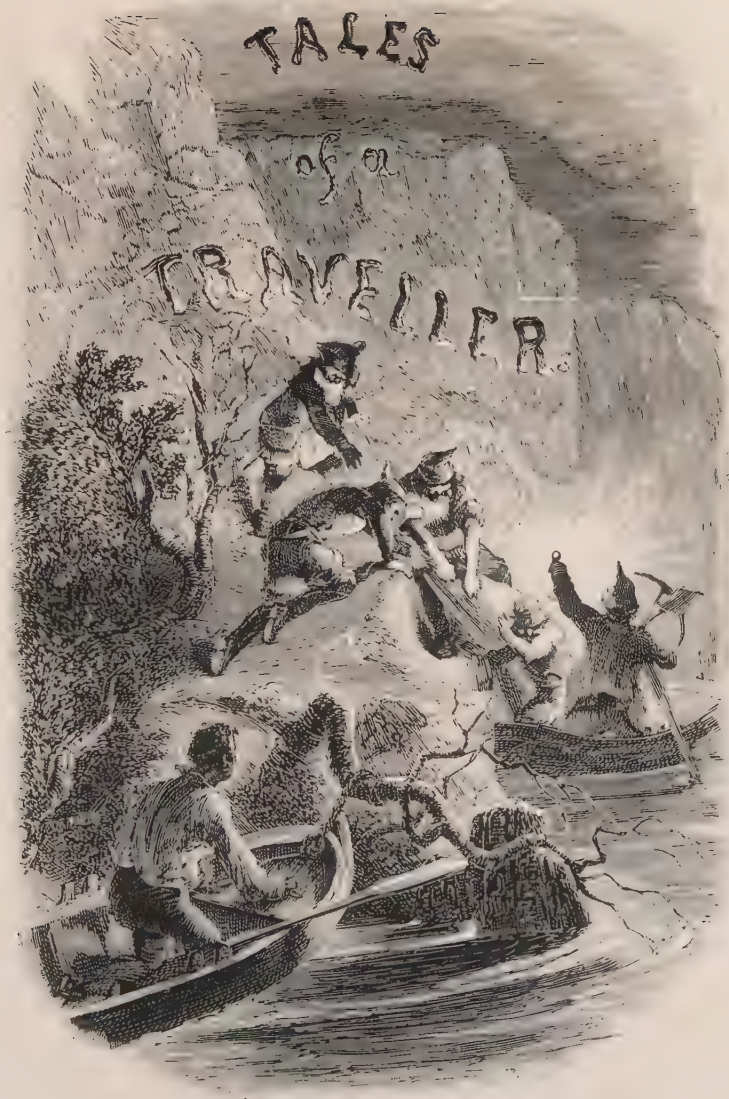
Jusef did not long survive the enemy he had so generously deplored. In the year 1354, as he was one day praying in the royal mosque of the Alhambra, a maniac rushed suddenly from behind and plunged a dagger in his side. The cries of the king brought his guards and courtiers to his assistance. They found him weltering in his blood, and in convulsions. He was borne to the royal apartments, but expired almost immediately. The murderer was cut to pieces, and his limbs burned in public, to gratify the fury of the populace.

The body of the king was interred in a superb sepulcher of white marble; a long epitaph in letters of gold upon an azure ground recorded his virtues. "Here lies a king and martyr of an illustrious line; gentle, learned and virtuous; renowned for the graces of his person and his manners; whose clemency, piety, and benevolence, were extolled throughout the kingdom of Granada. He was a great prince, an illustrious captain; a sharp sword of the Moslems; a valiant standard-bearer among the most potent monarchs," etc.

The mosque still remains which once resounded with the dying cries of Jusef, but the monument which recorded his virtues has long since disappeared. His name, however, remains inscribed among the ornaments of the Alhambra, and will be perpetuated in connection with this renowned pile, which it was his pride and delight to beautify.

Christianos, nin mover pelear contra ellos, estovieron todos quedos y dezian entre ellos que aquel dia muriera un noble rey y gran principe del mundo!"

END OF "THE ALHAMBRA"



TALES OF A TRAVELER

PART FIRST

STRANGE STORIES BY A NERVOUS GENTLEMAN

I'll tell you more; there was a fish taken,
A monstrous fish, with a sword by's side, a long
sword,

A pike in's neck, and a gun in's nose, a huge gun,
And letters of mart in's mouth, from the Duke
of Florence.

Cleanthes. This is a monstrous lie.

Tony. I do confess it.

Do you think I'd tell you truths?

—FLETCHER'S *Wife for a Month*

[The following adventures were related to me by the same nervous gentleman who told me the romantic tale of "The Stout Gentleman," published in Bracebridge Hall.

It is very singular, that although I expressly stated that story to have been told to me, and described the very person who told it, still it has been received as an adventure that happened to myself. Now, I protest I never met with any adventure of the kind. I should not have grieved at this, had it not been intimated by the author of "Waverley," in an introduction to his romance of "Peveril of the Peak," that he was himself the Stout Gentleman alluded to. I have ever since been importuned by letters and questions from gentlemen, and particularly from ladies without number, touching what I had seen of the great unknown.

Now, all this is extremely tantalizing. It is like being congratulated on the high prize when one has drawn a blank; for I have just as great a desire as any one of the public to penetrate the mystery of that very singular personage, whose voice fills every corner of the world, without any one being able to tell from whence it comes. He who keeps up such

a wonderful and whimsical incognito: whom nobody knows, and yet whom everybody thinks he can swear to.

My friend, the nervous gentleman, also, who is a man of very shy, retired habits, complains that he has been excessively annoyed in consequence of its getting about in his neighborhood that he is the fortunate personage. Insomuch that he has become a character of considerable notoriety in two or three country towns; and has been repeatedly teased to exhibit himself at blue-stockings parties, for no other reason than that of being "the gentleman who has had a glimpse of the author of 'Waverley.'"

Indeed, the poor man has grown ten times as nervous as ever, since he has discovered, on such good authority, who the stout gentleman was; and will never forgive himself for not having made a more resolute effort to get a full sight of him. He has anxiously endeavored to call up a recollection of what he saw of that portly personage; and has ever since kept a curious eye on all gentlemen of more than ordinary dimensions whom he has seen getting into stage coaches. All in vain! The features he had caught a glimpse of seem common to the whole race of stout gentlemen; and the great unknown remains as great an unknown as ever.]

A HUNTING DINNER

I WAS once at a hunting dinner, given by a worthy fox-hunting old baronet, who kept Bachelor's Hall in jovial style, in an ancient rook-haunted family mansion, in one of the middle counties. He had been a devoted admirer of the fair sex in his young days; but having traveled much, studied the sex in various countries with distinguished success, and returned home profoundly instructed, as he supposed, in the ways of woman, and a perfect master of the art of pleasing, he had the mortification of being jilted by a little boarding school girl, who was scarcely versed in the accidence of love.

The baronet was completely overcome by such an incredible defeat; retired from the world in disgust, put himself

under the government of his housekeeper, and took to fox-hunting like a perfect Jehu. Whatever poets may say to the contrary, a man will grow out of love as he grows old; and a pack of fox-hounds may chase out of his heart even the memory of a boarding-school goddess. The baronet was, when I saw him, as merry and mellow an old bachelor as ever followed a hound; and the love he had once felt for one woman had spread itself over the whole sex; so that there was not a pretty face in the whole country round but came in for a share.

The dinner was prolonged till a late hour; for, our host having no ladies in his household to summon us to the drawing-room, the bottle maintained its true bachelor sway, unrivaled by its potent enemy the tea-kettle. The old hall in which we dined echoed to bursts of robustious fox-hunting merriment that made the ancient antlers shake on the walls. By degrees, however, the wine and wassail of mine host began to operate upon bodies already a little jaded by the chase. The choice spirits that flashed up at the beginning of the dinner sparkled for a time, then gradually went out one after another, or only emitted now and then a faint gleam from the socket. Some of the briskest talkers, who had given tongue so bravely at the first burst, fell fast asleep; and none kept on their way but certain of those long-winded prozers, who, like short-legged hounds, worry on unnoticed at the bottom of conversation, but are sure to be in at the death. Even these at length subsided into silence; and scarcely anything was heard but the nasal communications of two or three veteran masticators, who, having been silent while awake, were indemnifying the company in their sleep.

At length the announcement of tea and coffee in the cedar parlor roused all hands from this temporary torpor. Every one awoke marvelously renovated, and while sipping the refreshing beverage out of the baronet's old-fashioned hereditary china, began to think of departing for their several homes. But here a sudden difficulty arose. While we had been prolonging our repast, a heavy winter storm had

set in, with snow, rain, and sleet, driven by such bitter blasts of wind that they threatened to penetrate to the very bone.

"It's all in vain," said our hospitable host, "to think of putting one's head out of doors in such weather. So, gentlemen, I hold you my guests for this night at least, and will have your quarters prepared accordingly."

The unruly weather, which became more and more tempestuous, rendered the hospitable suggestion unanswerable. The only question was, whether such an unexpected accession of company, to an already crowded house, would not put the housekeeper to her trumps to accommodate them.

"Pshaw," cried mine host, "did you ever know of a Bachelor's Hall that was not elastic, and able to accommodate twice as many as it could hold?" So out of a good-humored pique the housekeeper was summoned to consultation before us all. The old lady appeared, in her gala suit of faded brocade, which rustled with flurry and agitation, for in spite of mine host's bravado she was a little perplexed. But in a bachelor's house, and with bachelor guests, these matters are readily managed. There is no lady of the house to stand upon squeamish points about lodging guests in odd holes and corners, and exposing the shabby parts of the establishment. A bachelor's housekeeper is used to shifts and emergencies. After much worrying to and fro, and divers consultations about the red room, and the blue room, and the chintz room, and the damask room, and the little room with the bow window, the matter was finally arranged.

When all this was done, we were once more summoned to the standing rural amusement of eating. The time that had been consumed in dozing after dinner, and in the refreshment and consultation of the cedar parlor, was sufficient, in the opinion of the rosy-faced butler, to engender a reasonable appetite for supper. A slight repast had therefore been tricked up from the residue of dinner, consisting of cold sirloin of beef, hashed venison, a deviled leg of a turkey or so, and a few other of those light articles taken by country gentlemen to insure sound sleep and heavy snoring.

The nap after dinner had brightened up every one's wit; and a great deal of excellent humor was expended upon the perplexities of mine host and his housekeeper, by certain married gentlemen of the company, who considered themselves privileged in joking with a bachelor's establishment. From this the banter turned as to what quarters each would find, on being thus suddenly billeted in so antiquated a mansion.

"By my soul," said an Irish captain of dragoons, one of the most merry and boisterous of the party—"by my soul, but I should not be surprised if some of those good-looking gentlefolks that hang along the walls should walk about the rooms of this stormy night; or if I should find the ghost of one of these long-waisted ladies turning into my bed in mistake for her grave in the churchyard."

"Do you believe in ghosts, then?" said a thin, hatchet-faced gentleman, with projecting eyes like a lobster.

I had remarked this last personage throughout dinner-time for one of those incessant questioners who seem to have a craving, unhealthy appetite in conversation. He never seemed satisfied with the whole of a story; never laughed when others laughed; but always put the joke to the question. He could never enjoy the kernel of the nut, but pestered himself to get more out of the shell.

"Do you believe in ghosts, then?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"Faith, but I do," replied the jovial Irishman; "I was brought up in the fear and belief of them; we had a Benshee in our own family, honey."

"A Benshee—and what's that?" cried the questioner.

"Why, an old lady ghost that tends upon your real Milesian families, and wails at their window to let them know when some of them are to die."

"A mighty pleasant piece of information," cried an elderly gentleman, with a knowing look and a flexible nose, to which he could give a whimsical twist when he wished to be waggish.

"By my soul, but I'd have you know it's a piece of dis-

tion to be waited upon by a Benshee. It's a proof that one has pure blood in one's veins. But, egad, now we're talking of ghosts, there never was a house or a night better fitted than the present for a ghost adventure. Faith, Sir John, haven't you such a thing as a haunted chamber to put a guest in?"

"Perhaps," said the baronet, smiling, "I might accommodate you even on that point."

"Oh, I should like it of all things, my jewel. Some dark oaken room, with ugly woebegone portraits that stare dismally at one, and about which the housekeeper has a power of delightful stories of love and murder. And then a dim lamp, a table with a rusty sword across it, and a specter all in white to draw aside one's curtains at midnight—"

"In truth," said an old gentleman at one end of the table, "you put me in mind of an anecdote—"

"Oh, a ghost story! a ghost story!" was vociferated round the board, every one edging his chair a little nearer.

The attention of the whole company was now turned upon the speaker. He was an old gentleman, one side of whose face was no match for the other. The eyelid drooped and hung down like an unhinged window shutter. Indeed, the whole side of his head was dilapidated, and seemed like the wing of a house shut up and haunted. I'll warrant that side was well stuffed with ghost stories.

There was a universal demand for the tale.

"Nay," said the old gentleman, "it's a mere anecdote—and a very commonplace one; but such as it is you shall have it. It is a story that I once heard my uncle tell when I was a boy. But whether as having happened to himself or to another I cannot recollect. But no matter, it's very likely it happened to himself, for he was a man very apt to meet with strange adventures. I have heard him tell of others much more singular. At any rate, we will suppose it happened to himself."

"What kind of man was your uncle?" said the questioning gentleman.

"Why, he was rather a dry, shrewd kind of body; a great traveler, and fond of telling his adventures."

"Pray, how old might he have been when this happened?"

"When what happened?" cried the gentleman with the flexible nose, impatiently—"Egad, you have not given anything a chance to happen—come, never mind our uncle's age; let us have his adventures."

The inquisitive gentleman being for the moment silenced, the old gentleman with the haunted head proceeded.

THE ADVENTURE OF MY UNCLE

MANY years since, a long time before the French revolution, my uncle had passed several months at Paris. The English and French were on better terms in those days than at present, and mingled cordially together in society. The English went abroad to spend money then, and the French were always ready to help them: they go abroad to save money at present, and that they can do without French assistance. Perhaps the traveling English were fewer and choicer then than at present, when the whole nation has broke loose, and inundated the continent. At any rate, they circulated more readily and currently in foreign society, and my uncle, during his residence in Paris, made many very intimate acquaintances among the French noblesse.

Some time afterward, he was making a journey in the winter-time, in that part of Normandy called the Pays de Caux, when, as evening was closing in, he perceived the turrets of an ancient chateau rising out of the trees of its walled park, each turret with its high conical roof of gray slate, like a candle with an extinguisher on it.

"To whom does that chateau belong, friend?" cried my uncle to a meager, but fiery postilion, who, with tremendous jack boots and cocked hat, was floundering on before him.

"To Monseigneur the Marquis de —," said the pos-

tilion, touching his hat, partly out of respect to my uncle, and partly out of reverence to the noble name pronounced. My uncle recollected the marquis for a particular friend in Paris, who had often expressed a wish to see him at his paternal chateau. My uncle was an old traveler, one that knew how to turn things to account. He revolved for a few moments in his mind how agreeable it would be to his friend the marquis to be surprised in this sociable way by a pop visit; and how much more agreeable to himself to get into snug quarters in a chateau, and have a relish of the marquis's well-known kitchen, and a smack of his superior champagne and burgundy; rather than take up with the miserable lodgment and miserable fare of a country inn. In a few minutes, therefore, the meager postilion was cracking his whip like a very devil, or like a true Frenchman, up the long straight avenue that led to the chateau.

You have no doubt all seen French chateaus, as everybody travels in France nowadays. This was one of the oldest; standing naked and alone, in the midst of a desert of gravel walks and cold stone terraces; with a cold-looking formal garden, cut into angles and rhomboids; and a cold leafless park, divided geometrically by straight alleys; and two or three noseless, cold-looking statues without any clothing; and fountains spouting cold water enough to make one's teeth chatter. At least such was the feeling they imparted on the wintry day of my uncle's visit; though, in hot summer weather, I'll warrant there was glare enough to scorch one's eyes out.

The smacking of the postilion's whip, which grew more and more intense the nearer they approached, frightened a flight of pigeons out of the dove-cote, and rooks out of the roofs; and finally a crew of servants out of the chateau, with the marquis at their head. He was enchanted to see my uncle; for his chateau, like the house of our worthy host, had not many more guests at the time than it could accommodate. So he kissed my uncle on each cheek, after the French fashion, and ushered him into the castle.

The marquis did the honors of his house with the urbanity of his country. In fact, he was proud of his old family chateau; for part of it was extremely old. There was a tower and chapel that had been built almost before the memory of man; but the rest was more modern; the castle having been nearly demolished during the wars of the League. The marquis dwelt upon this event with great satisfaction, and seemed really to entertain a grateful feeling toward Henry IV. for having thought his paternal mansion worth battering down. He had many stories to tell of the prowess of his ancestors, and several skull-caps, helmets and cross-bows to show; and divers huge boots and buff jerkins that had been worn by the Leaguers. Above all, there was a two-handled sword, which he could hardly wield; but which he displayed as a proof that there had been giants in his family.

In truth, he was but a small descendant from such great warriors. When you looked at their bluff visages and brawny limbs, as depicted in their portraits, and then at the little marquis, with his spindle shanks; his sallow lantern visage, flanked with a pair of powdered ear-locks, or *ailles de pigeon*, that seemed ready to fly away with it; you would hardly believe him to be of the same race. But when you looked at the eyes that sparkled out like a beetle's from each side of his hooked nose, you saw at once that he inherited all the fiery spirit of his forefathers. In fact, a Frenchman's spirit never exhales, however his body may dwindle. It rather rarefies, and grows more inflammable, as the earthy particles diminish; and I have seen valor enough in a little fiery-hearted French dwarf to have furnished out a tolerable giant.

When once the marquis, as he was wont, put on one of the old helmets that were stuck up in his hall; though his head no more filled it than a dry pea its peascod; yet his eyes sparkled from the bottom of the iron cavern with the brilliancy of carbuncles; and when he poised the ponderous two-handled sword of his ancestors, you would have thought you saw the doughty little David wielding the sword of Goliath, which was unto him like a weaver's beam.

However, gentlemen, I am dwelling too long on this description of the marquis and his chateau; but you must excuse me; he was an old friend of my uncle's, and whenever my uncle told the story he was always fond of talking a great deal about his host.—Poor little marquis! He was one of that handful of gallant courtiers who made such a devoted, but hopeless stand in the cause of their sovereign, in the chateau of the Tuileries, against the irruption of the mob, on the sad tenth of August. He displayed the valor of a preux French chevalier to the last; flourished feebly his little court sword with a sa-sa! in face of a whole legion of *sansculottes*; but was pinned to the wall like a butterfly, by the pike of a poissarde, and his heroic soul was borne up to heaven on his *ailes de pigeon*.

But all this has nothing to do with my story; to the point then: When the hour arrived for retiring for the night, my uncle was shown to his room, in a venerable old tower. It was the oldest part of the chateau, and had in ancient times been the donjon or stronghold; of course the chamber was none of the best. The marquis had put him there, however, because he knew him to be a traveler of taste, and fond of antiquities; and also because the better apartments were already occupied. Indeed, he perfectly reconciled my uncle to his quarters by mentioning the great personages who had once inhabited them, all of whom were in some way or other connected with the family. If you would take his word for it, John Baliol, or, as he called him, Jean de Bailleul, had died of chagrin in this very chamber on hearing of the success of his rival, Robert the Bruce at the battle of Bannockburn; and when he added that the Duke de Guise had slept in it during the wars of the League, my uncle was fain to felicitate himself upon being honored with such distinguished quarters.

The night was shrewd and windy, and the chamber none of the warmest. An old, long-faced, long-bodied servant in quaint livery, who attended upon my uncle, threw down an armful of wood beside the fireplace, gave a queer look about

the room, and then wished him *bon repos*, with a grimace and a shrug that would have been suspicious from any other than an old French servant. The chamber had indeed a wild, crazy look, enough to strike any one who had read romances with apprehension and foreboding. The windows were high and narrow, and had once been loopholes, but had been rudely enlarged, as well as the extreme thickness of the walls would permit; and the ill-fitted casements rattled to every breeze. You would have thought, on a windy night, some of the old Leaguers were tramping and clanking about the apartment in their huge boots and rattling spurs. A door which stood ajar, and like a true French door would stand ajar, in spite of every reason and effort to the contrary, opened upon a long dark corridor, that led the Lord knows whither, and seemed just made for ghosts to air themselves in, when they turned out of their graves at midnight. The wind would spring up into a hoarse murmur through this passage, and creak the door to and fro, as if some dubious ghost were balancing in its mind whether to come in or not. In a word, it was precisely the kind of comfortless apartment that a ghost, if ghost there were in the chateau, would single out for its favorite lounge.

My uncle, however, though a man accustomed to meet with strange adventures, apprehended none at the time. He made several attempts to shut the door, but in vain. Not that he apprehended anything, for he was too old a traveler to be daunted by a wild-looking apartment; but the night, as I have said, was cold and gusty, something like the present, and the wind howled about the old turret pretty much as it does round this old mansion at this moment; and the breeze from the long dark corridor came in as damp and chilly as if from a dungeon. My uncle, therefore, since he could not close the door, threw a quantity of wood on the fire, which soon sent up a flame in the great wide-mouthed chimney that illumined the whole chamber, and made the shadow of the tongs on the opposite wall look like a long-legged giant. My uncle now clambered on top of the half

score of mattresses which form a French bed, and which stood in a deep recess; then tucking himself snugly in, and burying himself up to the chin in the bedclothes, he lay looking at the fire, and listening to the wind, and chuckling to think how knowingly he had come over his friend the marquis for a night's lodging: and so he fell asleep.

He had not taken above half of his first nap, when he was awakened by the clock of the chateau, in the turret over his chamber, which struck midnight. It was just such an old clock as ghosts are fond of. It had a deep dismal tone, and struck so slowly and tediously that my uncle thought it would never have done. He counted and counted till he was confident he counted thirteen, and then it stopped.

The fire had burned low, and the blaze of the last fagot was almost expiring, burning in small blue flames, which now and then lengthened up into little white gleams. My uncle lay with his eyes half closed, and his nightcap drawn almost down to his nose. His fancy was already wandering, and began to mingle up the present scene with the crater of Vesuvius, the French opera, the Coliseum at Rome, Dolly's chop-house in London, and all the farrago of noted places with which the brain of a traveler is crammed—in a word, he was just falling asleep.

Suddenly he was aroused by the sound of footsteps that appeared to be slowly pacing along the corridor. My uncle, as I have often heard him say himself, was a man not easily frightened; so he lay quiet, supposing that this might be some other guest, or some servant on his way to bed. The footsteps, however, approached the door; the door gently opened; whether of its own accord, or whether pushed open, my uncle could not distinguish:—a figure all in white glided in. It was a female, tall and stately in person, and of a most commanding air. Her dress was of an ancient fashion, ample in volume and sweeping the floor. She walked up to the fireplace without regarding my uncle; who raised his nightcap with one hand and stared earnestly at her. She remained for some time standing by the fire, which flashing

up at intervals cast blue and white gleams of light that enabled my uncle to remark her appearance minutely.

Her face was ghastly pale, and perhaps rendered still more so by the bluish light of the fire. It possessed beauty, but its beauty was saddened by care and anxiety. There was the look of one accustomed to trouble, but of one whom trouble could not cast down nor subdue; for there was still the predominating air of proud, unconquerable resolution. Such, at least, was the opinion formed by my uncle, and he considered himself a great physiognomist.

The figure remained, as I said, for some time by the fire, putting out first one hand, then the other, then each foot alternately, as if warming itself; for your ghosts, if ghost it really was, are apt to be cold. My uncle furthermore remarked that it wore high-heeled shoes, after an ancient fashion, with paste or diamond buckles, that sparkled as though they were alive. At length the figure turned gently round, casting a glassy look about the apartment, which, as it passed over my uncle, made his blood run cold, and chilled the very marrow in his bones. It then stretched its arms toward heaven, clasped its hands, and wringing them in a supplicating manner, glided slowly out of the room.

My uncle lay for some time meditating on this visitation, for (as he remarked when he told me the story), though a man of firmness, he was also a man of reflection, and did not reject a thing because it was out of the regular course of events. However, being, as I have before said, a great traveler, and accustomed to strange adventures, he drew his nightcap resolutely over his eyes, turned his back to the door, hoisted the bed-clothes high over his shoulders, and gradually fell asleep.

How long he slept he could not say, when he was awakened by the voice of some one at his bedside. He turned round and beheld the old French servant, with his ear-locks in tight buckles on each side of a long, lantern face, on which habit had deeply wrinkled an everlasting smile. He

made a thousand grimaces and asked a thousand pardons for disturbing monsieur, but the morning was considerably advanced. While my uncle was dressing, he called vaguely to mind the visitor of the preceding night. He asked the ancient domestic what lady was in the habit of rambling about this part of the chateau at night. The old valet shrugged his shoulders as high as his head, laid one hand on his bosom, threw open the other with every finger extended; made a most whimsical grimace, which he meant to be complimentary:

“It was not for him to know anything of *les braves fortunes* of monsieur.”

My uncle saw there was nothing satisfactory to be learned in this quarter. After breakfast he was walking with the marquis through the modern apartments of the chateau; sliding over the well-waxed floors of silken saloons, amid furniture rich in gilding and brocade; until they came to a long picture gallery, containing many portraits, some in oil and some in chalks.

Here was an ample field for the eloquence of his host, who had all the family pride of a nobleman of the *ancien regime*. There was not a grand name in Normandy, and hardly one in France, that was not, in some way or other, connected with his house. My uncle stood listening with inward impatience, resting sometimes on one leg, sometimes on the other, as the little marquis descanted, with his usual fire and vivacity, on the achievements of his ancestors, whose portraits hung along the wall; from the martial deeds of the stern warriors in steel, to the gallantries and intrigues of the blue-eyed gentlemen, with fair smiling faces, powdered ear-locks, laced ruffles, and pink and blue silk coats and breeches; not forgetting the conquests of the lovely shepherdesses, with hoop petticoats and waists no thicker than an hour-glass, who appeared ruling over their sheep and their swains with dainty crooks decorated with fluttering ribbons.

In the midst of his friend's discourse my uncle's eyes

rested on a full-length portrait, which struck him as being the very counterpart of his visitor of the preceding night.

"Methinks," said he, pointing to it, "I have seen the original of this portrait."

"*Pardonnez moi*," replied the marquis politely, "that can hardly be, as the lady has been dead more than a hundred years. That was the beautiful Duchess de Longueville, who figured during the minority of Louis the Fourteenth."

"And was there anything remarkable in her history?"

Never was question more unlucky. The little marquis immediately threw himself into the attitude of a man about to tell a long story. In fact, my uncle had pulled upon himself the whole history of the civil war of the Fronde, in which the beautiful duchess had played so distinguished a part. Turenne, Coligni, Mazarin, were called up from their graves to grace his narration; nor were the affairs of the Barricadoes, nor the chivalry of the Pertcocheres forgotten. My uncle began to wish himself a thousand leagues off from the marquis and his merciless memory, when suddenly the little man's recollections took a more interesting turn. He was relating the imprisonment of the Duke de Longueville, with the Princes Condé and Conti, in the chateau of Vincennes, and the ineffectual efforts of the duchess to rouse the sturdy Normans to their rescue. He had come to that part where she was invested by the royal forces in the chateau of Dieppe, and in imminent danger of falling into their hands.

"The spirit of the duchess," proceeded the marquis, "rose with her trials. It was astonishing to see so delicate and beautiful a being buffet so resolutely with hardships. She determined on a desperate means of escape. One dark unruly night, she issued secretly out of a small postern gate of the castle, which the enemy had neglected to guard. She was followed by her female attendants, a few domestics, and some gallant cavaliers who still remained faithful to her fortunes. Her object was to gain a small port about two leagues distant, where she had privately provided a vessel for her escape in case of emergency.

The little band of fugitives were obliged to perform the distance on foot. When they arrived at the port the wind was high and stormy, the tide contrary, the vessel anchored far off in the road, and no means of getting on board, but by a fishing shallop that lay tossing like a cockle shell on the edge of the surf. The duchess determined to risk the attempt. The seamen endeavored to dissuade her, but the imminence of her danger on shore and the magnanimity of her spirit urged her on. She had to be borne to the shallop in the arms of a mariner. Such was the violence of the wind and waves that he faltered, lost his foothold, and let his precious burden fall into the sea.

"The duchess was nearly drowned; but partly through her own struggles, partly by the exertions of the seamen, she got to land. As soon as she had a little recovered strength, she insisted on renewing the attempt. The storm, however, had by this time become so violent as to set all efforts at defiance. To delay, was to be discovered and taken prisoner. As the only resource left, she procured horses, mounted with her female attendants *en croupe* behind the gallant gentlemen who accompanied her, and scoured the country to seek some temporary asylum.

"While the duchess," continued the marquis, laying his forefinger on my uncle's breast to arouse his flagging attention, "while the duchess, poor lady, was wandering amid the tempest in this disconsolate manner, she arrived at this chateau. Her approach caused some uneasiness; for the clattering of a troop of horse, at dead of night, up the avenue of a lonely chateau, in those unsettled times, and in a troubled part of the country, was enough to occasion alarm.

"A tall, broad-shouldered chasseur, armed to the teeth, galloped ahead, and announced the name of the visitor. All uneasiness was dispelled. The household turned out with flambeaux to receive her, and never did torches gleam on a more weather-beaten, travel-stained band than came tramping into the court. Such pale, careworn faces, such bedraggled dresses, as the poor duchess and her females pre-

sented, each seated behind her cavalier; while half drenched, half drowsy pages and attendants seemed ready to fall from their horses with sleep and fatigue.

"The duchess was received with a hearty welcome by my ancestors. She was ushered into the hall of the chateau, and the fires soon crackled and blazed to cheer herself and her train; and every spit and stewpan was put in requisition to prepare ample refreshments for the wayfarers.

"She had a right to our hospitalities," continued the little marquis, drawing himself up with a slight degree of stateliness, "for she was related to our family. I'll tell you how it was: Her father, Henry de Bourbon, Prince of Conde—"

"But did the duchess pass the night in the chateau?" said my uncle rather abruptly, terrified at the idea of getting involved in one of the marquis's genealogical discussions.

"Oh, as to the duchess, she was put into the apartment you occupied last night, which, at that time, was a kind of state apartment. Her followers were quartered in the chambers opening upon the neighboring corridor, and her favorite page slept in an adjoining closet. Up and down the corridor walked the great chasseur, who had announced her arrival, and who acted as a kind of sentinel or guard. He was a dark, stern, powerful-looking fellow, and as the light of a lamp in the corridor fell upon his deeply-marked face and sinewy form, he seemed capable of defending the castle with his single arm.

"It was a rough, rude night; about this time of the year. —*Apròpos*—now I think of it, last night was the anniversary of her visit. I may well remember the precise date, for it was a night not to be forgotten by our house. There is a singular tradition concerning it in our family." Here the marquis hesitated, and a cloud seemed to gather about his bushy eyebrows. "There is a tradition—that a strange occurrence took place that night—a strange, mysterious, inexplicable occurrence."

Here he checked himself and paused.

"Did it relate to that lady?" inquired my uncle, eagerly.

"It was past the hour of midnight," resumed the marquis—"when the whole chateau—"

Here he paused again—my uncle made a movement of anxious curiosity.

"Excuse me," said the marquis—a slight blush streaking his sullen visage. "There are some circumstances connected with our family history which I do not like to relate. That was a rude period. A time of great crimes among great men; for you know high blood, when it runs wrong, will not run tamely like blood of the *canaille*—poor lady!—But I have a little family pride, that—excuse me—we will change the subject if you please."

My uncle's curiosity was piqued. The pompous and magnificent introduction had led him to expect something wonderful in the story to which it served as a kind of avenue. He had no idea of being cheated out of it by a sudden fit of unreasonable squeamishness. Besides, being a traveler, in quest of information, he considered it his duty to inquire into everything.

The marquis, however, evaded every question.

"Well," said my uncle, a little petulantly, "whatever you may think of it, I saw that lady last night."

The marquis stepped back and gazed at him with surprise.

"She paid me a visit in my bed-chamber "

The marquis pulled out his snuff-box with a shrug and a smile; taking it no doubt for an awkward piece of English pleasantry, which politeness required him to be charmed with. My uncle went on, gravely, however, and related the whole circumstance. The marquis heard him through with profound attention, holding his snuff-box unopened in his hand. When the story was finished he tapped on the lid of his box deliberately; took a long sonorous pinch of snuff—

"Bah!" said the marquis, and walked toward the other end of the gallery.

Here the narrator paused. The company waited for some time for him to resume his narrative; but he continued silent.

"Well," said the inquisitive gentleman, "and what did your uncle say then?"

"Nothing," replied the other.

"And what did the marquis say further?"

"Nothing."

"And that is all?"

"That is all," said the narrator, filling a glass of wine.

"I surmise," said the shrewd old gentleman with the waggish nose—"I surmise it was the old housekeeper walking her rounds to see that all was right."

"Bah!" said the narrator, "my uncle was too much accustomed to strange sights not to know a ghost from a housekeeper!"

There was a murmur round the table half of merriment, half of disappointment. I was inclined to think the old gentleman had really an afterpart of his story in reserve; but he sipped his wine and said nothing more; and there was an odd expression about his dilapidated countenance that left me in doubt whether he were in drollery or earnest.

"Egad," said the knowing gentleman with the flexible nose, "this story of your uncle puts me in mind of one that used to be told of an aunt of mine by the mother's side; though I don't know that it will bear a comparison; as the good lady was not quite so prone to meet with strange adventures. But, at any rate, you shall have it."

THE ADVENTURE OF MY AUNT

MY aunt was a lady of large frame, strong mind, and great resolution; she was what might be termed a very manly woman. My uncle was a thin, puny little man, very meek and acquiescent, and no match for my aunt. It was observed that he dwindled and dwindled gradually away, from the day of his marriage. His wife's powerful mind was too much for him; it wore him out. My aunt, however, took

all possible care of him, had half the doctors in town to prescribe for him, made him take all their prescriptions, *willy-nilly*, and dosed him with physic enough to cure a whole hospital. All was in vain. My uncle grew worse and worse the more dosing and nursing he underwent, until in the end he added another to the long list of matrimonial victims who have been killed with kindness.

“And was it his ghost that appeared to her?” asked the inquisitive gentleman, who had questioned the former storyteller.

“You shall hear,” replied the narrator:—My aunt took on mightily for the death of her poor dear husband! Perhaps she felt some compunction at having given him so much physic, and nursed him into his grave. At any rate, she did all that a widow could do to honor his memory. She spared no expense in either the quantity or quality of her mourning weeds; she wore a miniature of him about her neck, as large as a little sun dial; and she had a full-length portrait of him always hanging in her bed chamber. All the world extolled her conduct to the skies; and it was determined that a woman who behaved so well to the memory of one husband deserved soon to get another.

It was not long after this that she went to take up her residence in an old country seat in Derbyshire, which had long been in the care of merely a steward and housekeeper. She took most of her servants with her, intending to make it her principal abode. The house stood in a lonely, wild part of the country, among the gray Derbyshire hills; with a murderer hanging in chains on a bleak height in full view.

The servants from town were half frightened out of their wits at the idea of living in such a dismal, pagan-looking place; especially when they got together in the servants' hall in the evening, and compared notes on all the hobgoblin stories they had picked up in the course of the day. They were afraid to venture alone about the forlorn black-looking chambers. My ladies' maid, who was troubled with nerves, declared she could never sleep alone in such a “gashly, rum-

maging old building''; and the footman, who was a kind-hearted young fellow, did all in his power to cheer her up.

My aunt, herself, seemed to be struck with the lonely appearance of the house. Before she went to bed, therefore, she examined well the fastenings of the doors and windows, locked up the plate with her own hands, and carried the keys, together with a little box of money and jewels, to her own room; for she was a notable woman, and always saw to all things herself. Having put the keys under her pillow, and dismissed her maid, she sat by her toilet arranging her hair; for being, in spite of her grief for my uncle, rather a buxom widow, she was a little particular about her person. She sat for a little while looking at her face in the glass, first on one side, then on the other, as ladies are apt to do, when they would ascertain if they have been in good looks; for a roistering country squire of the neighborhood, with whom she had flirted when a girl, had called that day to welcome her to the country.

All of a sudden she thought she heard something move behind her. She looked hastily round, but there was nothing to be seen. Nothing but the grimly painted portrait of her poor dear man, which had been hung against the wall. She gave a heavy sigh to his memory, as she was accustomed to do whenever she spoke of him in company; and went on adjusting her night-dress. Her sigh was re-echoed, or answered by a long-drawn breath. She looked round again, but no one was to be seen. She ascribed these sounds to the wind, oozing through the rat holes of the old mansion; and proceeded leisurely to put her hair in papers, when, all at once, she thought she perceived one of the eyes of the portrait move.

“The back of her head being toward it!” said the storyteller with the ruined head, giving a knowing wink on the sound side of his visage—“good!”

“Yes, sir!” replied dryly the narrator, “her back being toward the portrait, but her eye fixed on its reflection in the glass.”

Well, as I was saying, she perceived one of the eyes of the portrait move. So strange a circumstance, as you may well suppose, gave her a sudden shock. To assure herself cautiously of the fact, she put one hand to her forehead, as if rubbing it; peeped through her fingers, and moved the candle with the other hand. The light of the taper gleamed on the eye and was reflected from it. She was sure it moved. Nay, more, it seemed to give her a wink, as she had sometimes known her husband to do when living! It struck a momentary chill to her heart; for she was a lone woman, and felt herself fearfully situated.

The chill was but transient. My aunt, who was almost as resolute a personage as your uncle, sir (turning to the old story-teller), became instantly calm and collected. She went on adjusting her dress. She even hummed a favorite air, and did not make a single false note. She casually overturned a dressing box; took a candle and picked up the articles leisurely, one by one, from the floor; pursued a rolling pin-cushion that was making the best of its way under the bed; then opened the door; looked for an instant into the corridor, as if in doubt whether to go; and then walked quietly out.

She hastened downstairs, ordered the servants to arm themselves with the first weapons that came to hand, placed herself at their head, and returned almost immediately.

Her hastily levied army presented a formidable force. The steward had a rusty blunderbuss; the coachman a loaded whip; the footman a pair of horse pistols; the cook a huge chopping knife, and the butler a bottle in each hand. My aunt led the van with a red-hot poker; and, in my opinion, she was the most formidable of the party. The waiting maid brought up the rear, dreading to stay alone in the servants' hall, smelling to a broken bottle of volatile salts, and expressing her terror of the ghostes.

"Ghosts!" said my aunt resolutely; "I'll singe their whiskers for them!"

They entered the chamber. All was still and undisturbed as when she left it. They approached the portrait of my uncle.



THE BOLD DRAGOON.

Irving, Vol. Two, p. 235.

"Pull me down that picture!" cried my aunt.

A heavy groan, and a sound like the chattering of teeth, was heard from the portrait. The servants shrunk back. The maid uttered a faint shriek and clung to the footman.

"Instantly!" added my aunt, with a stamp of the foot.

The picture was pulled down, and from a recess behind it, in which had formerly stood a clock, they hauled forth a round-shouldered, black-bearded varlet, with a knife as long as my arm, but trembling all over like an aspen leaf.

"Well, and who was he? No ghost, I suppose!" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"A knight of the post," replied the narrator, "who had been smitten with the worth of the wealthy widow; or rather a marauding Tarquin, who had stolen into her chamber to violate her purse and rifle her strong box when all the house should be asleep. In plain terms," continued he, "the vagabond was a loose idle fellow of the neighborhood, who had once been a servant in the house, and had been employed to assist in arranging it for the reception of its mistress. He confessed that he had contrived his hiding-place for his nefarious purposes, and had borrowed an eye from the portrait by way of a reconnoitering hole."

"And what did they do with him—did they hang him?" resumed the questioner.

"Hang him?—how could they?" exclaimed a beetle-browed barrister, with a hawk's nose—"the offense was not capital—no robbery nor assault had been committed—no forcible entry or breaking into the premises—"

"My aunt," said the narrator, "was a woman of spirit, and apt to take the law into her own hands. She had her own notions of cleanliness also. She ordered the fellow to be drawn through the horse-pond to cleanse away all offenses, and then to be well rubbed down with an oaken towel."

"And what became of him afterward?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"I do not exactly know—I believe he was sent on a voyage of improvement to Botany Bay."

"And your aunt—" said the inquisitive gentleman—"I'll warrant she took care to make her maid sleep in the room with her after that."

"No, sir, she did better—she gave her hand shortly after to the roistering squire; for she used to observe it was a dismal thing for a woman to sleep alone in the country."

"She was right," observed the inquisitive gentleman, nodding his head sagaciously—"but I am sorry they did not hang that fellow."

It was agreed on all hands that the last narrator had brought his tale to the most satisfactory conclusion; though a country clergyman present regretted that the uncle and aunt, who figured in the different stories, had not been married together. They certainly would have been well matched.

"But I don't see, after all," said the inquisitive gentleman, "that there was any ghost in this last story."

"Oh, if it's ghosts you want, honey," cried the Irish captain of dragoons, "if it's ghosts you want, you shall have a whole regiment of them. And since these gentlemen have been giving the adventures of their uncles and aunts, faith and I'll e'en give you a chapter too, out of my own family history."

THE BOLD DRAGOON

OR

THE ADVENTURE OF MY GRANDFATHER

MY grandfather was a bold dragoon, for it's a profession, d'ye see, that has run in the family. All my forefathers have been dragoons and died upon the field of honor except myself, and I hope my posterity may be able to say the same; however, I don't mean to be vainglorious. Well, my grandfather, as I said, was a bold dragoon, and had served in the Low Countries. In fact, he was one of that very army,

which, according to my uncle Toby, “swore so terribly in Flanders.” He could swear a good stick himself; and, moreover, was the very man that introduced the doctrine Corporal Trim mentions, of radical heat and radical moisture; or, in other words, the mode of keeping out the damp of ditch water by burned brandy. Be that as it may, it’s nothing to the purport of my story. I only tell it to show you that my grandfather was a man not easily to be humbugged. He had seen service; or, according to his own phrase, “he had seen the divil”—and that’s saying everything.

Well, gentlemen, my grandfather was on his way to England, for which he intended to embark at Ostend—bad luck to the place for one where I was kept by storms and head winds for three long days, and the divil of a jolly companion or pretty face to comfort me. Well, as I was saying, my grandfather was on his way to England, or rather to Ostend—no matter which, it’s all the same. So one evening, toward nightfall, he rode jollily into Bruges. Very like you all know Bruges, gentlemen, a queer, old-fashioned Flemish town, once they say a great place for trade and money-making, in old times, when the Mynheers were in their glory; but almost as large and as empty as an Irishman’s pocket at the present day. Well, gentlemen, it was the time of the annual fair. All Bruges was crowded; and the canals swarmed with Dutch boats, and the streets swarmed with Dutch merchants; and there was hardly any getting along for goods, wares, and merchandises, and peasants in big breeches, and women in half a score of petticoats.

My grandfather rode jollily along, in his easy, slashing way, for he was a saucy, sunshiny fellow—staring about him at the motley crowd, and the old houses with gable ends to the street and storks’ nests on the chimneys; winking at the *ya vrouwen* who showed their faces at the windows, and joking the women right and left in the street; all of whom laughed and took it in amazing good part; for though he did not know a word of their language, yet he had al-

ways a knack of making himself understood among the women.

Well, gentlemen, it being the time of the annual fair, all the town was crowded; every inn and tavern full, and my grandfather applied in vain from one to the other for admittance. At length he rode up to an old rickety inn that looked ready to fall to pieces, and which all the rats would have run away from, if they could have found room in any other house to put their heads. It was just such a queer building as you see in Dutch pictures, with a tall roof that reached up into the clouds; and as many garrets, one over the other, as the seven heavens of Mahomet. Nothing had saved it from tumbling down but a stork's nest on the chimney, which always brings good luck to a house in the Low Countries; and at the very time of my grandfather's arrival there were two of these long-legged birds of grace standing like ghosts on the chimney top. Faith, but they've kept the house on its legs to this very day; for you may see it any time you pass through Bruges, as it stands there yet; only it is turned into a brewery—a brewery of strong Flemish beer; at least it was so when I came that way after the battle of Waterloo.

My grandfather eyed the house curiously as he approached. It might not altogether have struck his fancy, had he not seen in large letters over the door:

HEER VERKOOPT MAN GOEDEN DRANK

My grandfather had learned enough of the language to know that the sign promised good liquor. "This is the house for me," said he, stopping short before the door.

The sudden appearance of a dashing dragoon was an event in an old inn frequented only by the peaceful sons of traffic. A rich burgher of Antwerp, a stately ample man, in a broad Flemish hat, and who was the great man and great patron of the establishment, sat smoking a clean long pipe on one side of the door; a fat little distiller of Geneva from Schiedam

sat smoking on the other, and the bottle-nosed host stood in the door, and the comely hostess, in crimped cap, beside him; and the hostess's daughter, a plump Flanders lass, with long gold pendants in her ears, was at a side window.

"Humph!" said the rich burgher of Antwerp, with a sulky glance at the stranger.

"Der duyvel!" said the fat little distiller of Schiedam.

The landlord saw with the quick glance of a publican that the new guest was not at all, at all, to the taste of the old ones; and to tell the truth, he did not himself like my grandfather's saucy eye. He shook his head—"Not a garret in the house but was full."

"Not a garret!" echoed the landlady.

"Not a garret!" echoed the daughter.

The burgher of Antwerp and the little distiller of Schiedam continued to smoke their pipes sullenly, eyed the enemy askance from under their broad hats, but said nothing.

My grandfather was not a man to be browbeaten. He threw the reins on his horse's neck, cocked his hat on one side, stuck one arm akimbo, slapped his broad thigh with the other hand—

"Faith and troth!" said he, "but I'll sleep in this house this very night!"

My grandfather had on a tight pair of buckskins—the slap went to the landlady's heart.

He followed up the vow by jumping off his horse, and making his way past the staring Mynheers into the public room. Maybe you've been in the bar-room of an old Flemish inn—faith, but a handsome chamber it was as you'd wish to see; with a brick floor, a great fireplace, with the whole Bible history in glazed tiles; and then the mantel-piece, pitching itself headforemost out of the wall, with a whole regiment of cracked tea-pots and earthen jugs paraded on it; not to mention half a dozen great Delft platters hung about the room by way of pictures; and the little bar in one corner, and the bouncing barmaid inside of it with a red calico cap and yellow ear-drops.

My grandfather snapped his fingers over his head, as he cast an eye round the room: "Faith, this is the very house I've been looking after," said he.

There was some further show of resistance on the part of the garrison, but my grandfather was an old soldier, and an Irishman to boot, and not easily repulsed, especially after he had got into the fortress. So he blarney'd the landlord, kissed the landlord's wife, tickled the landlord's daughter, chucked the barmaid under the chin; and it was agreed on all hands that it would be a thousand pities, and a burning shame into the bargain, to turn such a bold dragoon into the streets. So they laid their heads together, that is to say, my grandfather and the landlady, and it was at length agreed to accommodate him with an old chamber that had for some time been shut up.

"Some say it's haunted!" whispered the landlord's daughter, "but you're a bold dragoon, and I daresay don't fear ghosts."

"The divil a bit!" said my grandfather, pinching her plump cheek; "but if I should be troubled by ghosts, I've been to the Red Sea in my time, and have a pleasant way of laying them, my darling!"

And then he whispered something to the girl which made her laugh, and give him a good-humored box on the ear. In short, there was nobody knew better how to make his way among the petticoats than my grandfather.

In a little while, as was his usual way, he took complete possession of the house: swaggering all over it—into the stable to look after his horse; into the kitchen to look after his supper. He had something to say or do with every one; smoked with the Dutchmen; drank with the Germans; slapped the men on the shoulders, tickled the women under the ribs—never since the days of Ally Croaker had such a rattling blade been seen. The landlord stared at him with astonishment; the landlord's daughter hung her head and giggled whenever he came near; and as he turned his back and swaggered along, his tight jacket setting off his broad

shoulders and plump buckskins, and his long sword trailing by his side, the maids whispered to one another—"What a proper man!"

At supper my grandfather took command of the table d'hôte as though he had been at home; helped everybody, not forgetting himself; talked with every one, whether he understood their language or not; and made his way into the intimacy of the rich burgher of Antwerp, who had never been known to be sociable with any one during his life. In fact, he revolutionized the whole establishment, and gave it such a rouse that the very house reeled with it. He outsat every one at table excepting the little fat distiller of Schiedam, who had sat soaking for a long time before he broke forth; but when he did, he was a very devil incarnate. He took a violent affection for my grandfather; so they sat drinking, and smoking, and telling stories, and singing Dutch and Irish songs, without understanding a word each other said, until the little Hollander was fairly swamped with his own gin and water, and carried off to bed, whooping and hiccuping, and trolling the burden of a Low Dutch love song.

Well, gentlemen, my grandfather was shown to his quarters, up a huge staircase composed of loads of hewn timber, and through long rigmarole passages, hung with blackened paintings of fruit, and fish, and game, and country frolics, and huge kitchens, and portly burgomasters, such as you see about old-fashioned Flemish inns, till at length he arrived at his room.

An old-times chamber it was, sure enough, and crowded with all kinds of trumpery. It looked like an infirmary for decayed and superannuated furniture; where everything diseased and disabled was sent to nurse or to be forgotten. Or rather, it might have been taken for a general congress of old legitimate movables, where every kind and country had a representative. No two chairs were alike: such high backs and low backs, and leather bottoms and worsted bottoms, and straw bottoms, and no bottoms; and cracked marble

tables with curiously carved legs, holding balls in their claws, as though they were going to play at ninepins.

My grandfather made a bow to the motley assemblage as he entered, and having undressed himself, placed his light in the fireplace, asking pardon of the tongs, which seemed to be making love to the shovel in the chimney corner, and whispering soft nonsense in its ear.

The rest of the guests were by this time sound asleep; for your Mynheers are huge sleepers. The housemaids, one by one, crept up yawning to their attics, and not a female head in the inn was laid on a pillow that night without dreaming of the Bold Dragoon.

My grandfather, for his part, got into bed, and drew over him one of those great bags of down, under which they smother a man in the Low Countries; and there he lay, melting between two feather beds, like an anchovy sandwich between two slices of toast and butter. He was a warm-complexioned man, and this smothering played the very deuce with him. So, sure enough, in a little while it seemed as if a legion of imps were twitching at him, and all the blood in his veins was in fever heat.

He lay still, however, until all the house was quiet, excepting the snoring of the Mynheers from the different chambers; who answered one another in all kinds of tones and cadences, like so many bullfrogs in a swamp. The quieter the house became, the more unquiet became my grandfather. He waxed warmer and warmer, until at length the bed became too hot to hold him.

"Maybe the maid had warmed it too much?" said the curious gentleman inquiringly.

"I rather think the contrary," replied the Irishman. "But be that as it may, it grew too hot for my grandfather."

"Faith there's no standing this any longer," says he; so he jumped out of bed and went strolling about the house.

"What for?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"Why, to cool himself, to be sure," replied the other, "or perhaps to find a more comfortable bed—or perhaps—but no

matter what he went for—he never mentioned; and there's no use in taking up our time in conjecturing."

Well, my grandfather had been for some time absent from his room, and was returning, perfectly cool, when just as he reached the door he heard a strange noise within. He paused and listened. It seemed as if some one was trying to hum a tune in defiance of the asthma. He recollected the report of the room's being haunted; but he was no believer in ghosts. So he pushed the door gently ajar and peeped in.

Egad, gentlemen, there was a gambol carrying on within enough to have astonished St. Anthony.

By the light of the fire he saw a pale weazen-faced fellow in a long flannel gown and a tall white nightcap with a tassel to it, who sat by the fire, with a bellows under his arm by way of bagpipe, from which he forced the asthmatical music that had bothered my grandfather. As he played, too, he kept twitching about with a thousand queer contortions; nodding his head and bobbing about his tasseled nightcap.

My grandfather thought this very odd and mighty presumptuous, and was about to demand what business he had to play his wind instruments in another gentleman's quarters, when a new cause of astonishment met his eye. From the opposite side of the room a long-backed, bandy-legged chair, covered with leather, and studded all over in a cox-comical fashion with little brass nails, got suddenly into motion; thrust out first a claw foot, then a crooked arm, and at length, making a leg, slid gracefully up to an easy-chair, of tarnished brocade, with a hole in its bottom, and led it gallantly out in a ghostly minuet about the floor.

The musician now played fiercer and fiercer, and bobbed his head and his nightcap about like mad. By degrees the dancing mania seemed to seize upon all the other pieces of furniture. The antique, long-bodied chairs paired off in couples and led down a country dance; a three-legged stool danced a hornpipe, though horribly puzzled by its supernumerary leg; while the amorous tongs seized the shovel round the waist, and whirled it about the room in a German

waltz. In short, all the movables got in motion, capering about; pirouetting, hands across, right and left, like so many devils, all except a great clothes-press, which kept courtesying and courtesying, like a dowager, in one corner, in exquisite time to the music—being either too corpulent to dance, or perhaps at a loss for a partner.

My grandfather concluded the latter to be the reason; so being, like a true Irishman, devoted to the sex, and at all times ready for a frolic, he bounced into the room, calling to the musician to strike up “Paddy O’Rafferty,” capered up to the clothes-press and seized upon two handles to lead her out: When, whizz!—the whole revel was at an end. The chairs, tables, tongs, and shovel slunk in an instant as quietly into their places as if nothing had happened; and the musician vanished up the chimney, leaving the bellows behind him in his hurry. My grandfather found himself seated in the middle of the floor, with the clothes-press sprawling before him, and the two handles jerked off and in his hands.

“Then, after all, this was a mere dream!” said the inquisitive gentleman.

“The divil a bit of a dream!” replied the Irishman: “there never was a truer fact in this world. Faith, I should have liked to see any man tell my grandfather it was a dream.”

Well, gentlemen, as the clothes-press was a mighty heavy body, and my grandfather likewise, particularly in rear, you may easily suppose two such heavy bodies coming to the ground would make a bit of a noise. Faith, the old mansion shook as though it had mistaken it for an earthquake. The whole garrison was alarmed. The landlord, who slept just below, hurried up with a candle to inquire the cause, but with all his haste his daughter had hurried to the scene of uproar before him. The landlord was followed by the landlady, who was followed by the bouncing barmaid, who was followed by the simpering chambermaids all holding together, as well as they could, such garments as they had first lain

hands on; but all in a terrible hurry to see what the devil was to pay in the chamber of the bold dragoon.

My grandfather related the marvelous scene he had witnessed, and the prostrate clothes-press and the broken handles bore testimony to the fact. There was no contesting such evidence; particularly with a lad of my grandfather's complexion, who seemed able to make good every word either with sword or shillalah. So the landlord scratched his head and looked silly, as he was apt to do when puzzled. The landlady scratched—no, she did not scratch her head—but she knit her brow, and did not seem half pleased with the explanation. But the landlady's daughter corroborated it by recollecting that the last person who had dwelt in that chamber was a famous juggler who had died of St. Vitus's dance, and no doubt had infected all the furniture.

This set all things to rights, particularly when the chambermaids declared that they had all witnessed strange carryings on in that room—and as they declared this “upon their honors,” there could not remain a doubt upon the subject.

“And did your grandfather go to bed again in that room?” said the inquisitive gentleman.

“That's more than I can tell. Where he passed the rest of the night was a secret he never disclosed. In fact, though he had seen much service, he was but indifferently acquainted with geography, and apt to make blunders in his travels about inns at night that it would have puzzled him sadly to account for in the morning.”

“Was he ever apt to walk in his sleep?” said the knowing old gentleman.

“Never that I heard of.”

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MYSTERIOUS PICTURE

As one story of the kind produces another, and as all the company seemed fully engrossed by the topic, and disposed to bring their relatives and ancestors upon the scene, there is no knowing how many more ghost adventures we might have heard, had not a corpulent old fox-hunter, who had slept soundly through the whole, now suddenly awakened, with a loud and long-drawn yawn. The sound broke the charm; the ghosts took to flight as though it had been cock-crowing, and there was a universal move for bed.

"And now for the haunted chamber," said the Irish captain, taking his candle.

"Ay, who's to be the hero of the night?" said the gentleman with the ruined head.

"That we shall see in the morning," said the old gentleman with the nose: "whoever looks pale and grizzly will have seen the ghost."

"Well, gentlemen," said the baronet, "there's many a true thing said in jest. In fact, one of you will sleep in a room to-night—"

"What—a haunted room? a haunted room? I claim the adventure—and I—and I—and I," cried a dozen guests, talking and laughing at the same time.

"No—no," said mine host, "there is a secret about one of my rooms on which I feel disposed to try an experiment. So, gentlemen, none of you shall know who has the haunted chamber, until circumstances reveal it. I will not even know it myself, but will leave it to chance and the allotment of the housekeeper. At the same time, if it will be any satisfaction to you, I will observe, for the honor of my paternal

mansion, that there's scarcely a chamber in it but is well worthy of being haunted."

We now separated for the night, and each went to his allotted room. Mine was in one wing of the building, and I could not but smile at its resemblance in style to those eventful apartments described in the tales of the supper-table. It was spacious and gloomy, decorated with lamp-black portraits, a bed of ancient damask, with a tester sufficiently lofty to grace a couch of state, and a number of massive pieces of old-fashioned furniture. I drew a great claw-footed armchair before the wide fireplace; stirred up the fire; sat looking into it, and musing upon the odd stories I had heard; until, partly overcome by the fatigue of the day's hunting, and partly by the wine and wassail of mine host, I fell asleep in my chair.

The uneasiness of my position made my slumber troubled, and laid me at the mercy of all kinds of wild and fearful dreams; now it was that my perfidious dinner and supper rose in rebellion against my peace. I was hag-ridden by a fat saddle of mutton; a plum pudding weighed like lead upon my conscience; the merry thought of a capon filled me with horrible suggestions; and a deviled leg of a turkey stalked in all kinds of diabolical shapes through my imagination. In short, I had a violent fit of the nightmare. Some strange indefinite evil seemed hanging over me that I could not avert; something terrible and loathsome oppressed me that I could not shake off. I was conscious of being asleep, and strove to rouse myself, but every effort redoubled the evil; until, gasping, struggling, almost strangling, I suddenly sprang bolt upright in my chair, and awoke.

The light on the mantel-piece had burned low, and the wick was divided; there was a great winding sheet made by the dripping wax on the side toward me. The disordered taper emitted a broad flaring flame, and threw a strong light on a painting over the fireplace, which I had not hitherto observed.

It consisted merely of a head, or rather a face, that ap-

peared to be staring full upon me, and with an expression that was startling. It was without a frame, and at the first glance I could hardly persuade myself that it was not a real face, thrusting itself out of the dark oaken panel. I sat in my chair gazing at it, and the more I gazed the more it disquieted me. I had never before been affected in the same way by any painting. The emotions it caused were strange and indefinite. They were something like what I have heard ascribed to the eyes of the basilisk; or like that mysterious influence in reptiles termed fascination. I passed my hand over my eyes several times, as if seeking instinctively to brush away this illusion—in vain—they instantly reverted to the picture, and its chilling, creeping influence over my flesh was redoubled.

I looked around the room on other pictures, either to divert my attention or to see whether the same effect would be produced by them. Some of them were grim enough to produce the effect, if the mere grimness of the painting produced it—no such thing. My eye passed over them all with perfect indifference, but the moment it reverted to this visage over the fireplace it was as if an electric shock darted through me. The other pictures were dim and faded; but this one protruded from a plain black ground in the strongest relief, and with wonderful truth of coloring. The expression was that of agony—the agony of intense bodily pain; but a menace scowled upon the brow, and a few sprinklings of blood added to its ghastliness. Yet it was not all these characteristics—it was some horror of the mind, some inscrutable antipathy awakened by this picture, which harrowed up my feelings.

I tried to persuade myself that this was chimerical; that my brain was confused by the fumes of mine host's good cheer, and, in some measure, by the odd stories about paintings which had been told at supper. I determined to shake off these vapors of the mind; rose from my chair, and walked about the room; snapped my fingers; rallied myself; laughed aloud. It was a forced laugh, and the echo of it in the old

chamber jarred upon my ear. I walked to the window; tried to discern the landscape through the glass. It was pitch darkness and howling storm without; and as I heard the wind moan among the trees, I caught a reflection of this accursed visage in the pane of glass, as though it were staring through the window at me. Even the reflection of it was thrilling.

How was this vile nervous fit, for such I now persuaded myself it was, to be conquered? I determined to force myself not to look at the painting; but to undress quickly and get into bed. I began to undress, but in spite of every effort I could not keep myself from stealing a glance every now and then at the picture; and a glance was now sufficient to distress me. Even when my back was turned to it, the idea of this strange face behind me, peering over my shoulder, was insufferable. I threw off my clothes and hurried into bed; but still this visage gazed upon me. I had a full view of it from my bed, and for some time could not take my eyes from it. I had grown nervous to a dismal degree.

I put out the light, and tried to force myself to sleep—all in vain! The fire, gleaming up a little, threw an uncertain light about the room, leaving, however, the region of the picture in deep shadow. What, thought I, if this be the chamber about which mine host spoke as having a mystery reigning over it?—I had taken his words merely as spoken in jest; might they have a real import? I looked around. The faintly-lighted apartment had all the qualifications requisite for a haunted chamber. It began in my infected imagination to assume strange appearances. The old portraits turned paler and paler, and blacker and blacker; the streaks of light and shadow thrown among the quaint old articles of furniture gave them singular shapes and characters. There was a huge dark clothes-press of antique form, gorgeous in brass and lustrous with wax, that began to grow oppressive to me.

Am I then, thought I, indeed, the hero of the haunted room? Is there really a spell laid upon me, or is this all some contrivance of mine host to raise a laugh at my expense?

The idea of being hag-ridden by my own fancy all night, and then bantered on my haggard looks the next day was intolerable; but the very idea was sufficient to produce the effect, and to render me still more nervous. Pish, said I, it can be no such thing. How could my worthy host imagine that I or any man would be so worried by a mere picture? It is my own diseased imagination that torments me. I turned in my bed, and shifted from side to side, to try to fall asleep; but all in vain. When one cannot get asleep by lying quiet, it is seldom that tossing about will effect the purpose. The fire gradually went out and left the room in darkness. Still I had the idea of this inexplicable countenance gazing and keeping watch upon me through the darkness. Nay, what was worse, the very darkness seemed to give it additional power, and to multiply its terrors. It was like having an unseen enemy hovering about one in the night. Instead of having one picture now to worry me, I had a hundred. I fancied it in every direction. And there it is, thought I—and there, and there—with its horrible and mysterious expression, still gazing and gazing on me. No—if I must suffer this strange and dismal influence, it were better face a single foe than thus be haunted by a thousand images of it.

Whoever has been in such a state of nervous agitation must know that the longer it continues the more uncontrollable it grows; the very air of the chamber seemed at length infected by the baleful presence of this picture. I fancied it hovering over me. I almost felt the fearful visage from the wall approaching my face—it seemed breathing upon me. This is not to be borne, said I, at length, springing out of bed. I can stand this no longer. I shall only tumble and toss about here all night; make a very specter of myself, and become the hero of the haunted chamber in good earnest. Whatever be the consequence, I'll quit this cursed room and seek a night's rest elsewhere. They can but laugh at me at all events, and they'll be sure to have the laugh upon me if I pass a sleepless night and show them a haggard and woe-begone visage in the morning.

All this was half muttered to myself, as I hastily slipped on my clothes; which having done, I groped my way out of the room, and downstairs to the drawing-room. Here, after tumbling over two or three pieces of furniture, I made out to reach a sofa, and stretching myself upon it determined to bivouac there for the night.

The moment I found myself out of the neighborhood of that strange picture, it seemed as if the charm were broken. All its influence was at an end. I felt assured that it was confined to its own dreary chamber, for I had, with a sort of instinctive caution, turned the key when I closed the door. I soon calmed down, therefore, into a state of tranquillity; from that into a drowsiness, and finally into a deep sleep; out of which I did not awake until the house maid, with her besom and her matin song, came to put the room in order. She stared at finding me stretched upon the sofa; but I presume circumstances of the kind were not uncommon after hunting dinners in her master's bachelor establishment; for she went on with her song and her work, and took no further heed of me.

I had an unconquerable repugnance to return to my chamber; so I found my way to the butler's quarters, made my toilet in the best way circumstances would permit, and was among the first to appear at the breakfast table. Our breakfast was a substantial fox-hunter's repast, and the company were generally assembled at it. When ample justice had been done to the tea, coffee, cold meats, and humming ale, for all these were furnished in abundance, according to the tastes of the different guests, the conversation began to break out, with all the liveliness and freshness of morning mirth.

"But who is the hero of the haunted chamber?—Who has seen the ghost last night?" said the inquisitive gentleman, rolling his lobster eyes about the table.

The question set every tongue in motion; a vast deal of bantering, criticising of countenances, of mutual accusation and retort, took place. Some had drunk deep, and some were

unshaven, so that there were suspicious faces enough in the assembly. I alone could not enter with ease and vivacity into the joke. I felt tongue-tied—embarrassed. A recollection of what I had seen and felt the preceding night still haunted my mind. It seemed as if the mysterious picture still held a thrall upon me. I thought also that our host's eye was turned on me with an air of curiosity. In short, I was conscious that I was the hero of the night, and felt as if every one might read it in my looks.

The jokes, however, passed over, and no suspicion seemed to attach to me. I was just congratulating myself on my escape, when a servant came in, saying that the gentleman who had slept on the sofa in the drawing-room had left his watch under one of the pillows. My repeater was in his hand.

“What!” said the inquisitive gentleman, “did any gentleman sleep on the sofa?”

“Soho! soho! a hare—a hare!” cried the old gentleman with the flexible nose.

I could not avoid acknowledging the watch, and was rising in great confusion, when a boisterous old squire who sat beside me exclaimed, slapping me on the shoulder, “’Sblood, lad! thou’rt the man as has seen the ghost!”

The attention of the company was immediately turned to me; if my face had been pale the moment before, it now glowed almost to burning. I tried to laugh, but could only make a grimace; and found all the muscles of my face twitching at sixes and sevens, and totally out of all control.

It takes but little to raise a laugh among a set of fox-hunters. There was a world of merriment and joking at my expense; and as I never relished a joke overmuch when it was at my own expense, I began to feel a little nettled. I tried to look cool and calm and to restrain my pique; but the coolness and calmness of a man in a passion are confounded treacherous.

Gentlemen, said I—with a slight cocking of the chin, and a bad attempt at a smile—this is all very pleasant—ha! ha!—

very pleasant—but I'd have you know I am as little superstitious as any of you—ha! ha!—and as to anything like timidity—you may smile, gentlemen—but I trust there is no one here means to insinuate that.— As to a room's being haunted, I repeat, gentlemen—(growing a little warm at seeing a cursed grin breaking out round me)—as to a room's being haunted, I have as little faith in such silly stories as any one. But, since you put the matter home to me, I will say that I have met with something in my room strange and inexplicable to me—(a shout of laughter). Gentlemen, I am serious—I know well what I am saying—I am calm, gentlemen (striking my fist upon the table)—by heaven I am calm. I am neither trifling, nor do I wish to be trifled with—(the laughter of the company suppressed with ludicrous attempts at gravity). There is a picture in the room in which I was put last night, that has had an effect upon me the most singular and incomprehensible.

“A picture!” said the old gentleman with the haunted head. “A picture!” cried the narrator with the waggish nose. “A picture! a picture!” echoed several voices. Here there was an ungovernable peal of laughter.

I could not contain myself. I started up from my seat—looked round on the company with fiery indignation—thrust both my hands into my pockets, and strode up to one of the windows, as though I would have walked through it. I stopped short; looked out upon the landscape without distinguishing a feature of it; and felt my gorge rising almost to suffocation.

Mine host saw it was time to interfere. He had maintained an air of gravity through the whole of the scene, and now stepped forth as if to shelter me from the overwhelming merriment of my companions.

“Gentlemen,” said he, “I dislike to spoil sport, but you have had your laugh, and the joke of the haunted chamber has been enjoyed. I must now take the part of my guest. I must not only vindicate him from your pleasantries, but I must reconcile him to himself, for I suspect he is a little out

of humor with his own feelings; and above all, I must crave his pardon for having made him the subject of a kind of experiment.

“Yes, gentlemen, there is something strange and peculiar in the chamber to which our friend was shown last night. There is a picture which possesses a singular and mysterious influence; and with which there is connected a very curious story. It is a picture to which I attach a value from a variety of circumstances; and though I have often been tempted to destroy it, from the odd and uncomfortable sensations it produces in every one that beholds it, yet I have never been able to prevail upon myself to make the sacrifice. It is a picture I never like to look upon myself, and which is held in awe by all my servants. I have, therefore, banished it to a room but rarely used; and should have had it covered last night, had not the nature of our conversation and the whimsical talk about a haunted chamber tempted me to let it remain, by way of experiment, whether a stranger, totally unacquainted with its story, would be affected by it.”

The words of the baronet had turned every thought into a different channel; all were anxious to hear the story of the mysterious picture; and for myself, so strongly were my feelings interested, that I forgot to feel piqued at the experiment which my host had made upon my nerves, and joined eagerly in the general entreaty.

As the morning was stormy and precluded all egress, my host was glad of any means of entertaining his company; so drawing his armchair beside the fire, he began:

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER

MANY years since, when I was a young man, and had just left Oxford, I was sent on the grand tour to finish my education. I believe my parents had tried in vain to inoculate me with wisdom; so they sent me to mingle with society, in hopes I might take it the natural way. Such, at least, appears to be the reason for which nine-tenths of our youngsters are sent abroad.

In the course of my tour I remained some time at Venice. The romantic character of the place delighted me; I was very much amused by the air of adventure and intrigue that prevailed in this region of masks and gondolas; and I was exceedingly smitten by a pair of languishing black eyes that played upon my heart from under an Italian mantle. So I persuaded myself that I was lingering at Venice to study men and manners. At least I persuaded my friends so, and that answered all my purpose. Indeed, I was a little prone to be struck by peculiarities in character and conduct, and my imagination was so full of romantic associations with Italy that I was always on the lookout for adventure.

Everything chimed in with such a humor in this old mermaid of a city. My suite of apartments were in a proud, melancholy palace on the grand canal, formerly the residence of a Magnifico, and sumptuous with the traces of decayed grandeur. My gondolier was one of the shrewdest of his class, active, merry, intelligent, and, like his brethren, secret as the grave; that is to say, secret to all the world except his master. I had not had him a week before he put me behind all the curtains in Venice. I liked the silence and mystery of the place, and when I sometimes saw from my window a black gondola gliding mysteriously along in the dusk of the

evening, with nothing visible but its little glimmering lantern, I would jump into my own zenduletto, and give a signal for pursuit. But I am running away from my subject with the recollection of youthful follies, said the baronet, checking himself; let me come to the point.

Among my familiar resorts was a casino under the Arcades on one side of the grand square of St. Mark. Here I used frequently to lounge and take my ice on those warm summer nights when in Italy everybody lives abroad until morning. I was seated here one evening, when a group of Italians took seat at a table on the opposite side of the saloon. Their conversation was gay and animated, and carried on with Italian vivacity and gesticulation.

I remarked among them one young man, however, who appeared to take no share, and find no enjoyment in the conversation; though he seemed to force himself to attend to it. He was tall and slender, and of extremely prepossessing appearance. His features were fine, though emaciated. He had a profusion of black glossy hair that curled lightly about his head, and contrasted with the extreme paleness of his countenance. His brow was haggard; deep furrows seemed to have been plowed into his visage by care, not by age, for he was evidently in the prime of youth. His eye was full of expression and fire, but wild and unsteady. He seemed to be tormented by some strange fancy or apprehension. In spite of every effort to fix his attention on the conversation of his companions, I noticed that every now and then he would turn his head slowly round, give a glance over his shoulder, and then withdraw it with a sudden jerk, as if something painful had met his eye. This was repeated at intervals of about a minute; and he appeared hardly to have got over one shock before I saw him slowly preparing to encounter another.

After sitting some time in the casino, the party paid for the refreshments they had taken and departed. The young man was the last to leave the saloon, and I remarked him glancing behind him in the same way, just as he passed out

at the door. I could not resist the impulse to rise and follow him; for I was at an age when a romantic feeling of curiosity is easily awakened. The party walked slowly down the Arcades, talking and laughing as they went. They crossed the Piazzetta, but paused in the middle of it to enjoy the scene. It was one of those moonlight nights so brilliant and clear in the pure atmosphere of Italy. The moonbeams streamed on the tall tower of St. Mark, and lighted up the magnificent front and swelling domes of the Cathedral. The party expressed their delight in animated terms. I kept my eye upon the young man. He alone seemed abstracted and self-occupied. I noticed the same singular, and, as it were, furtive glance over the shoulder that had attracted my attention in the casino. The party moved on, and I followed; they passed along the walks called the Broglio; turned the corner of the ducal palace, and getting into a gondola, glided swiftly away.

The countenance and conduct of this young man dwelt upon my mind. There was something in his appearance that interested me exceedingly. I met him a day or two after in a gallery of paintings. He was evidently a connoisseur, for he always singled out the most masterly productions, and the few remarks drawn from him by his companions showed an intimate acquaintance with the art. His own taste, however, ran on singular extremes. On Salvator Rosa in his most savage and solitary scenes; on Raphael, Titian, and Correggio in their softest delineations of female beauty. On these he would occasionally gaze with transient enthusiasm. But this seemed only a momentary forgetfulness. Still would recur that cautious glance behind, and always quickly withdrawn, as though something terrible had met his view.

I encountered him frequently afterward. At the theater, at balls, at concerts; at the promenades in the gardens of San Georgio; at the grotesque exhibitions in the square of St. Mark; among the throng of merchants on the Exchange by the Rialto. He seemed, in fact, to seek crowds; to hunt after bustle and amusement; yet never to take any interest

•

in either the business or gayety of the scene. Ever an air of painful thought, of wretched abstraction; and ever that strange and recurring movement, of glancing fearfully over the shoulder. I did not know at first but this might be caused by apprehension of arrest; or perhaps from dread of assassination. But, if so, why should he go thus continually abroad; why expose himself at all times and in all places?

I became anxious to know this stranger. I was drawn to him by that romantic sympathy that sometimes draws young men toward each other. His melancholy threw a charm about him in my eyes, which was no doubt heightened by the touching expression of his countenance, and the manly graces of his person; for manly beauty has its effect even upon man. I had an Englishman's habitual diffidence and awkwardness of address to contend with; but I subdued it, and, from frequently meeting him in the casino, gradually edged myself into his acquaintance. I had no reserve on his part to contend with. He seemed on the contrary to court society; and in fact to seek anything rather than be alone.

When he found I really took an interest in him he threw himself entirely upon my friendship. He clung to me like a drowning man. He would walk with me for hours up and down the place of St. Mark—or he would sit until night was far advanced in my apartment; he took rooms under the same roof with me; and his constant request was, that I would permit him, when it did not incommode me, to sit by me in my saloon. It was not that he seemed to take a particular delight in my conversation; but rather that he craved the vicinity of a human being; and above all, of a being that sympathized with him. “I have often heard,” said he, “of the sincerity of Englishmen—thank God I have one at length for a friend!”

Yet he never seemed disposed to avail himself of my sympathy other than by mere companionship. He never sought to unbosom himself to me; there appeared to be a settled corroding anguish in his bosom that neither could be soothed “by silence nor by speaking.” A devouring melan-

choly preyed upon his heart, and seemed to be drying up the very blood in his veins. It was not a soft melancholy—the disease of the affections; but a parching, withering agony. I could see at times that his mouth was dry and feverish; he almost panted rather than breathed; his eyes were bloodshot; his cheeks pale and livid, with now and then faint streaks athwart them—baleful gleams of the fire that was consuming his heart. As my arm was within his, I felt him press it at times with a convulsive motion to his side; his hands would clinch themselves involuntarily, and a kind of shudder would run through his frame. I reasoned with him about his melancholy, and sought to draw from him the cause—he shrunk from all confiding. “Do not seek to know it,” said he, “you could not relieve it if you knew it; you would not even seek to relieve it—on the contrary, I should lose your sympathy; and that,” said he, pressing my hand convulsively, “that I feel has become too dear to me to risk.”

I endeavored to awaken hope within him. He was young; life had a thousand pleasures in store for him; there is a healthy reaction in the youthful heart; it medicines its own wounds—“Come, come,” said I, “there is no grief so great that youth cannot outgrow it.”—“No! no!” said he, clinching his teeth, and striking repeatedly, with the energy of despair, upon his bosom—“It is here—here—deep-rooted; draining my heart’s blood. It grows and grows, while my heart withers and withers! I have a dreadful monitor that gives me no repose—that follows me step by step; and will follow me step by step, until it pushes me into my grave!”

As he said this he gave involuntarily one of those fearful glances over his shoulder, and shrunk back with more than usual horror. I could not resist the temptation to allude to this movement, which I supposed to be some mere malady of the nerves. The moment I mentioned it his face became crimsoned and convulsed—he grasped me by both hands: “For God’s sake,” exclaimed he, with a piercing agony of voice—“never allude to that again; let us avoid this subject, my friend: you cannot relieve me, indeed you cannot relieve

me; but you may add to the torments I suffer—at some future day you shall know all.”

I never resumed the subject; for however much my curiosity might be aroused, I felt too true a compassion for his sufferings to increase them by my intrusion. I sought various ways to divert his mind, and to arouse him from the constant meditations in which he was plunged. He saw my efforts, and seconded them as far as in his power, for there was nothing moody or wayward in his nature; on the contrary, there was something frank, generous, unassuming, in his whole deportment. All the sentiments that he uttered were noble and lofty. He claimed no indulgence; he asked no toleration. He seemed content to carry his load of misery in silence, and only sought to carry it by my side. There was a mute beseeching manner about him, as if he craved companionship as a charitable boon; and a tacit thankfulness in his looks, as if he felt grateful to me for not repulsing him.

I felt this melancholy to be infectious. It stole over my spirits; interfered with all my gay pursuits, and gradually saddened my life; yet I could not prevail upon myself to shake off a being who seemed to hang upon me for support. In truth, the generous traits of character that beamed through all this gloom had penetrated to my heart. His bounty was lavish and open-handed. His charity melting and spontaneous. Not confined to mere donations, which often humiliate as much as they relieve. The tone of his voice, the beam of his eye, enhanced every gift, and surprised the poor suppliant with that rarest and sweetest of charities, the charity not merely of the hand, but of the heart. Indeed, his liberality seemed to have something in it of self-abasement and expiation. He humbled himself, in a manner, before the mendicant. “What right have I to ease and affluence,” would he murmur to himself, “when innocence wanders in misery and rags?”

The Carnival time arrived. I had hoped that the gay scenes which then presented themselves might have some cheering effect. I mingled with him in the motley throng

that crowded the place of St. Mark. We frequented operas, masquerades, balls. All in vain. The evil kept growing on him; he became more and more haggard and agitated. Often, after we had returned from one of these scenes of revelry, I have entered his room, and found him lying on his face on the sofa: his hands clinched in his fine hair, and his whole countenance bearing traces of the convulsions of his mind.

The Carnival passed away; the season of Lent succeeded; Passion week arrived. We attended one evening a solemn service in one of the churches; in the course of which a grand piece of vocal and instrumental music was performed relating to the death of our Saviour.

I had remarked that he was always powerfully affected by music; on this occasion he was so in an extraordinary degree. As the pealing notes swelled through the lofty aisles, he seemed to kindle up with fervor. His eyes rolled upward, until nothing but the whites were visible; his hands were clasped together, until the fingers were deeply imprinted in the flesh. When the music expressed the dying agony, his face gradually sunk upon his knees; and at the touching words resounding through the church, "*Jesu mori*," sobs burst from him uncontrolled. I had never seen him weep before; his had always been agony rather than sorrow. I augured well from the circumstance. I let him weep on uninterrupted. When the service was ended we left the church. He hung on my arm as we walked homeward, with something of a softer and more subdued manner; instead of that nervous agitation I had been accustomed to witness. He alluded to the service we had heard. "Music," said he, "is indeed the voice of heaven; never before have I felt more impressed by the story of the atonement of our Saviour. Yes, my friend," said he, clasping his hands with a kind of transport, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

We parted for the night. His room was not far from mine, and I heard him for some time busied in it. I fell asleep, but was awakened before daylight. The young man

stood by my bedside, dressed for traveling. He held a sealed packet and a large parcel in his hand, which he laid on the table. "Farewell, my friend," said he, "I am about to set forth on a long journey; but, before I go, I leave with you these remembrances. In this packet you will find the particulars of my story. When you read them, I shall be far away; do not remember me with aversion. You have been, indeed, a friend to me. You have poured oil into a broken heart—but you could not heal it.—Farewell—let me kiss your hand—I am unworthy to embrace you." He sunk on his knees, seized my hand in despite of my efforts to the contrary, and covered it with kisses. I was so surprised by all this scene that I had not been able to say a word.

But we shall meet again, said I, hastily, as I saw him hurrying toward the door.

"Never—never in this world!" said he solemnly. He sprang once more to my bedside—seized my hand, pressed it to his heart and to his lips, and rushed out of the room.

Here the baronet paused. He seemed lost in thought, and sat looking upon the floor and drumming with his fingers on the arm of his chair.

"And did this mysterious personage return?" said the inquisitive gentleman. "Never!" replied the baronet, with a pensive shake of the head: "I never saw him again." "And pray what has all this to do with the picture?" inquired the old gentleman with the nose. "True!" said the questioner. "Is it the portrait of this crack-brained Italian?"

"No!" said the baronet, dryly, not half liking the appellation given to his hero; "but this picture was inclosed in the parcel he left with me. The sealed packet contained its explanation. There was a request on the outside that I would not open it until six months had elapsed. I kept my promise, in spite of my curiosity. I have a translation of it by me, and had meant to read it, by way of accounting for the mystery of the chamber, but I fear I have already detained the company too long."

Here there was a general wish expressed to have the

manuscript read; particularly on the part of the inquisitive gentleman. So the worthy baronet drew out a fairly written manuscript, and wiping his spectacles, read aloud the following story:

THE STORY OF THE YOUNG ITALIAN

I WAS born at Naples. My parents, though of noble rank, were limited in fortune, or rather my father was ostentatious beyond his means, and expended so much in his palace, his equipage, and his retinue, that he was continually straitened in his pecuniary circumstances. I was a younger son, and looked upon with indifference by my father, who, from a principle of family pride, wished to leave all his property to my elder brother.

I showed, when quite a child, an extreme sensibility. Everything affected me violently. While yet an infant in my mother's arms, and before I had learned to talk, I could be wrought upon to a wonderful degree of anguish or delight by the power of music. As I grew older my feelings remained equally acute, and I was easily transported into paroxysms of pleasure or rage. It was the amusement of my relatives and of the domestics to play upon this irritable temperament. I was moved to tears, tickled to laughter, provoked to fury, for the entertainment of company, who were amused by such a tempest of mighty passion in a pigmy frame. They little thought, or perhaps little heeded, the dangerous sensibilities they were fostering. I thus became a little creature of passion before reason was developed. In a short time I grew too old to be a plaything, and then I became a torment. The tricks and passions I had been teased into became irksome, and I was disliked by my teachers for the very lessons they had taught me.

My mother died; and my power as a spoiled child was at an end. There was no longer any necessity to humor or tolerate me, for there was nothing to be gained by it, as I

was no favorite of my father. I therefore experienced the fate of a spoiled child in such situation, and was neglected, or noticed only to be crossed and contradicted. Such was the early treatment of a heart which, if I am judge of it at all, was naturally disposed to the extremes of tenderness and affection.

My father, as I have already said, never liked me—in fact, he never understood me; he looked upon me as willful and wayward, as deficient in natural affection:—it was the stateliness of his own manner; the loftiness and grandeur of his own look that had repelled me from his arms. I always pictured him to myself as I had seen him clad in his senatorial robes, rustling with pomp and pride. The magnificence of his person had daunted my strong imagination. I could never approach him with the confiding affection of a child.

My father's feelings were wrapped up in my elder brother. He was to be the inheritor of the family title and the family dignity, and everything was sacrificed to him—I, as well as everything else. It was determined to devote me to the church, that so my humors and myself might be removed out of the way, either of tasking my father's time and trouble, or interfering with the interests of my brother. At an early age, therefore, before my mind had dawned upon the world and its delights, or known anything of it beyond the precincts of my father's palace, I was sent to a convent, the superior of which was my uncle, and was confided entirely to his care.

My uncle was a man totally estranged from the world; he had never relished, for he had never tasted its pleasures; and he deemed rigid self-denial as the great basis of Christian virtue. He considered every one's temperament like his own; or at least he made them conform to it. His character and habits had an influence over the fraternity of which he was superior. A more gloomy saturnine set of beings were never assembled together. The convent, too, was calculated to awaken sad and solitary thoughts. It was situated in a

gloomy gorge of those mountains away south of Vesuvius. All distant views were shut out by sterile volcanic heights. A mountain stream raved beneath its walls, and eagles screamed about its turrets.

I had been sent to this place at so tender an age as soon to lose all distinct recollection of the scenes I had left behind. As my mind expanded, therefore, it formed its idea of the world from the convent and its vicinity, and a dreary world it appeared to me. An early tinge of melancholy was thus infused into my character; and the dismal stories of the monks, about devils and evil spirits, with which they affrighted my young imagination, gave me a tendency to superstition which I could never effectually shake off. They took the same delight to work upon my ardent feelings that had been so mischievously exercised by my father's household.

I can recollect the horrors with which they fed my heated fancy during an eruption of Vesuvius. We were distant from that volcano, with mountains between us; but its convulsive throes shook the solid foundations of nature. Earthquakes threatened to topple down our convent towers. A lurid, baleful light hung in the heavens at night, and showers of ashes, borne by the wind, fell in our narrow valley. The monks talked of the earth being honeycombed beneath us; of streams of molten lava raging through its veins; of caverns of sulphurous flames roaring in the center, the abodes of demons and the damned; of fiery gulfs ready to yawn beneath our feet. All these tales were told to the doleful accompaniment of the mountain's thunders, whose low bellowing made the walls of our convent vibrate.

One of the monks had been a painter, but had retired from the world and embraced this dismal life in expiation of some crime. He was a melancholy man, who pursued his art in the solitude of his cell, but made it a source of penance to him. His employment was to portray, either on canvas or in waxen models, the human face and human form in the agonies of death and in all the stages of dissolution and decay. The fearful mysteries of the charnel house were un-

folded in his labors—the loathsome banquet of the beetle and the worm.—I turn with shuddering even from the recollection of his works. Yet, at that time, my strong but ill-directed imagination seized with ardor upon his instructions in his art. Anything was a variety from the dry studies and monotonous duties of the cloister. In a little while I became expert with my pencil, and my gloomy productions were thought worthy of decorating some of the altars of the chapel.

In this dismal way was a creature of feeling and fancy brought up. Everything genial and amiable in my nature was repressed, and nothing brought out but what was unprofitable and ungracious. I was ardent in my temperament; quick, mercurial, impetuous, formed to be a creature all love and adoration; but a leaden hand was laid on all my finer qualities. I was taught nothing but fear and hatred. I hated my uncle, I hated the monks, I hated the convent in which I was immured. I hated the world, and I almost hated myself, for being, as I supposed, so hating and hateful an animal.

When I had nearly attained the age of sixteen, I was suffered, on one occasion, to accompany one of the brethren on a mission to a distant part of the country. We soon left behind us the gloomy valley in which I had been pent up for so many years, and, after a short journey among the mountains, emerged upon the voluptuous landscape that spreads itself about the Bay of Naples. Heavens! how transported was I, when I stretched my gaze over a vast reach of delicious sunny country, gay with groves and vineyards; with Vesuvius rearing its forked summit to my right; the blue Mediterranean to my left, with its enchanting coast studded with shining towns and sumptuous villas; and Naples, my native Naples, gleaming far, far in the distance.

Good God! was this the lovely world from which I had been excluded! I had reached that age when the sensibilities are in all their bloom and freshness. Mine had been checked and chilled. They now burst forth with the sud-

denness of a retarded spring. My heart, hitherto unnaturally shrunk up, expanded into a riot of vague, but delicious emotions. The beauty of nature intoxicated, bewildered me. The song of the peasants; their cheerful looks; their happy avocations; the picturesque gayety of their dresses; their rustic music; their dances; all broke upon me like witchcraft. My soul responded to the music; my heart danced in my bosom. All the men appeared amiable, all the women lovely.

I returned to the convent, that is to say, my body returned, but my heart and soul never entered there again. I could not forget this glimpse of a beautiful and a happy world; a world so suited to my natural character. I had felt so happy while in it; so different a being from what I felt myself when in the convent—that tomb of the living. I contrasted the countenances of the beings I had seen, full of fire and freshness and enjoyment, with the pallid, leaden, lack-luster visages of the monks; the music of the dance, with the droning chant of the chapel. I had before found the exercises of the cloister wearisome; they now became intolerable. The dull round of duties wore away my spirit; my nerves became irritated by the fretful tinkling of the convent bell; evermore dinging among the mountain echoes; evermore calling me from my repose at night, my pencil by day, to attend to some tedious and mechanical ceremony of devotion.

I was not of a nature to meditate long without putting my thoughts into action. My spirit had been suddenly aroused, and was now all awake within me. I watched my opportunity, fled from the convent, and made my way on foot to Naples. As I entered its gay and crowded streets, and beheld the variety and stir of life around me, the luxury of palaces, the splendor of equipages, and the pantomimic animation of the motley populace, I seemed as if awakened to a world of enchantment, and solemnly vowed that nothing should force me back to the monotony of the cloister.

I had to inquire my way to my father's palace, for I had

been so young on leaving it that I knew not its situation. I found some difficulty in getting admitted to my father's presence, for the domestics scarcely knew that there was such a being as myself in existence, and my monastic dress did not operate in my favor. Even my father entertained no recollection of my person. I told him my name, threw myself at his feet, implored his forgiveness, and entreated that I might not be sent back to the convent.

He received me with the condescension of a patron rather than the kindness of a parent. He listened patiently but coldly to my tale of monastic grievances and disgusts, and promised to think what else could be done for me. This coldness blighted and drove back all the frank affection of my nature that was ready to spring forth at the least warmth of parental kindness. All my early feelings toward my father revived; I again looked up to him as the stately magnificent being that had daunted my childish imagination, and felt as if I had no pretensions to his sympathies. My brother engrossed all his care and love; he inherited his nature, and carried himself toward me with a protecting rather than a fraternal air. It wounded my pride, which was great. I could brook condescension from my father, for I looked up to him with awe as a superior being; but I could not brook patronage from a brother, who, I felt, was intellectually my inferior. The servants perceived that I was an unwelcome intruder in the paternal mansion, and, menial-like, they treated me with neglect. Thus baffled at every point, my affections outraged wherever they would attach themselves, I became sullen, silent, and desponding. My feelings, driven back upon myself, entered and preyed upon my own heart. I remained for some days an unwelcome guest rather than a restored son in my father's house. I was doomed never to be properly known there. I was made, by wrong treatment, strange even to myself; and they judged of me from my strangeness.

I was startled one day at the sight of one of the monks of my convent gliding out of my father's room. He saw me,

but pretended not to notice me; and this very hypocrisy made me suspect something. I had become sore and susceptible in my feelings; everything inflicted a wound on them. In this state of mind I was treated with marked disrespect by a pampered minion, the favorite servant of my father. All the pride and passion of my nature rose in an instant, and I struck him to the earth.

My father was passing by; he stopped not to inquire the reason, nor indeed could he read the long course of mental sufferings which were the real cause. He rebuked me with anger and scorn; he summoned all the haughtiness of his nature, and grandeur of his look, to give weight to the contumely with which he treated me. I felt I had not deserved it—I felt that I was not appreciated—I felt that I had that within me which merited better treatment; my heart swelled against a father's injustice. I broke through my habitual awe of him. I replied to him with impatience; my hot spirit flushed in my cheek and kindled in my eye, but my sensitive heart swelled as quickly, and before I had half vented my passion I felt it suffocated and quenched in my tears. My father was astonished and incensed at this turning of the worm, and ordered me to my chamber. I retired in silence, choking with contending emotions.

I had not been long there when I overheard voices in an adjoining apartment. It was a consultation between my father and the monk, about the means of getting me back quietly to the convent. My resolution was taken. I had no longer a home nor a father. That very night I left the paternal roof. I got on board a vessel about making sail from the harbor, and abandoned myself to the wide world. No matter to what port she steered; any part of so beautiful a world was better than my convent. No matter where I was cast by fortune; any place would be more a home to me than the home I had left behind. The vessel was bound to Genoa. We arrived there after a voyage of a few days.

As I entered the harbor, between the moles which embrace it, and beheld the amphitheater of palaces and churches

and splendid gardens, rising one above another, I felt at once its title to the appellation of Genoa the Superb. I landed on the mole an utter stranger, without knowing what to do or whither to direct my steps. No matter; I was released from the thralldom of the convent and the humiliations of home! When I traversed the Strada Balbi and the Strada Nuova, those streets of palaces, and gazed at the wonders of architecture around me; when I wandered at close of day, amid a gay throng of the brilliant and the beautiful, through the green alleys of the Aqua Verdi, or among the colonnades and terraces of the magnificent Doria Gardens; I thought it impossible to be ever otherwise than happy in Genoa.

A few days sufficed to show me my mistake. My scanty purse was exhausted, and for the first time in my life I experienced the sordid distress of penury. I had never known the want of money, and had never adverted to the possibility of such an evil. I was ignorant of the world and all its ways; and when first the idea of destitution came over my mind its effect was withering. I was wandering pensively through the streets which no longer delighted my eyes, when chance led my steps into the magnificent church of the Annunciata.

A celebrated painter of the day was at that moment superintending the placing of one of his pictures over an altar. The proficiency which I had acquired in his art during my residence in the convent had made me an enthusiastic amateur. I was struck, at the first glance, with the painting. It was the face of a Madonna. So innocent, so lovely, such a divine expression of maternal tenderness! I lost for the moment all recollection of myself in the enthusiasm of my art. I clasped my hands together, and uttered an ejaculation of delight. The painter perceived my emotion. He was flattered and gratified by it. My air and manner pleased him, and he accosted me. I felt too much the want of friendship to repel the advances of a stranger, and there was something in this one so benevolent and winning that in a moment he gained my confidence.

I told him my story and my situation, concealing only my name and rank. He appeared strongly interested by my recital; invited me to his house, and from that time I became his favorite pupil. He thought he perceived in me extraordinary talents for the art, and his encomiums awakened all my ardor. What a blissful period of my existence was it that I passed beneath his roof. Another being seemed created within me, or rather, all that was amiable and excellent was drawn out. I was as recluse as ever I had been at the convent, but how different was my seclusion. My time was spent in storing my mind with lofty and poetical ideas; in meditating on all that was striking and noble in history or fiction; in studying and tracing all that was sublime and beautiful in nature. I was always a visionary, imaginative being, but now my reveries and imaginings all elevated me to rapture.

I looked up to my master as to a benevolent genius that had opened to me a region of enchantment. I became devotedly attached to him. He was not a native of Genoa, but had been drawn thither by the solicitation of several of the nobility, and had resided there but a few years, for the completion of certain works he had undertaken. His health was delicate, and he had to confide much of the filling up of his designs to the pencils of his scholars. He considered me as particularly happy in delineating the human countenance; in seizing upon characteristic though fleeting expressions and fixing them powerfully upon my canvas. I was employed continually, therefore, in sketching faces, and often when some particular grace or beauty or expression was wanted in a countenance, it was intrusted to my pencil. My benefactor was fond of bringing me forward; and partly, perhaps, through my actual skill, and partly by his partial praises, I began to be noted for the expression of my countenances.

Among the various works which he had undertaken was a historical piece for one of the palaces of Genoa, in which were to be introduced the likenesses of several of the family. Among these was one intrusted to my pencil. It was that

of a young girl who as yet was in a convent for her education. She came out for the purpose of sitting for the picture. I first saw her in an apartment of one of the sumptuous palaces of Genoa. She stood before a casement that looked out upon the bay: a stream of vernal sunshine fell upon her, and shed a kind of glory round her as it lighted up the rich crimson chamber. She was but sixteen years of age—and oh, how lovely! The scene broke upon me like a mere vision of spring and youth and beauty. I could have fallen down and worshiped her. She was like one of those fictions of poets and painters, when they would express the beau ideal that haunts their minds with shapes of indescribable perfection.

I was permitted to sketch her countenance in various positions, and I fondly protracted the study that was undoing me. The more I gazed on her the more I became enamored; there was something almost painful in my intense admiration. I was but nineteen years of age; shy, diffident, and inexperienced. I was treated with attention and encouragement, for my youth and my enthusiasm in my art had won favor for me; and I am inclined to think that there was something in my air and manner that inspired interest and respect. Still the kindness with which I was treated could not dispel the embarrassment into which my own imagination threw me when in presence of this lovely being. It elevated her into something almost more than mortal. She seemed too exquisite for earthly use; too delicate and exalted for human attainment. As I sat tracing her charms on my canvas, with my eyes occasionally riveted on her features, I drank in delicious poison that made me giddy. My heart alternately gushed with tenderness and ached with despair. Now I became more than ever sensible of the violent fires that had lain dormant at the bottom of my soul. You who are born in a more temperate climate and under a cooler sky have little idea of the violence of passion in our southern bosoms.

A few days finished my task; Bianca returned to her convent, but her image remained indelibly impressed upon

my heart. It dwelt on my imagination; it became my pervading idea of beauty. It had an effect even upon my pencil; I became noted for my felicity in depicting female loveliness; it was but because I multiplied the image of Bianca. I soothed, and yet fed my fancy, by introducing her in all the productions of my master. I have stood with delight in one of the chapels of the Annunciata, and heard the crowd extol the seraphic beauty of a saint which I had painted; I have seen them bow down in adoration before the painting: they were bowing before the loveliness of Bianca.

I existed in this kind of dream, I might almost say delirium, for upward of a year. Such is the tenacity of my imagination that the image which was formed in it continued in all its power and freshness. Indeed, I was a solitary, meditative being, much given to reverie, and apt to foster ideas which had once taken strong possession of me. I was roused from this fond, melancholy, delicious dream by the death of my worthy benefactor. I cannot describe the pangs his death occasioned me. It left me alone and almost broken hearted. He bequeathed to me his little property; which, from the liberality of his disposition and his expensive style of living, was indeed but small; and he most particularly recommended me, in dying, to the protection of a nobleman who had been his patron.

The latter was a man who passed for munificent. He was a lover and an encourager of the arts, and evidently wished to be thought so. He fancied he saw in me indications of future excellence; my pencil had already attracted attention; he took me at once under his protection; seeing that I was overwhelmed with grief, and incapable of exerting myself in the mansion of my late benefactor, he invited me to sojourn for a time in a villa which he possessed on the border of the sea, in the picturesque neighborhood of Sestri de Ponenti.

I found at the villa the count's only son Filippo: he was nearly of my age, prepossessing in his appearance, and fascinating in his manners; he attached himself to me, and seemed

to court my good opinion. I thought there was something of profession in his kindness, and of caprice in his disposition; but I had nothing else near me to attach myself to, and my heart felt the need of something to repose itself upon. His education had been neglected; he looked upon me as his superior in mental powers and acquirements, and tacitly acknowledged my superiority. I felt that I was his equal in birth, and that gave an independence to my manner which had its effect. The caprice and tyranny I saw sometimes exercised on others, over whom he had power, were never manifested toward me. We became intimate friends and frequent companions. Still I loved to be alone, and to indulge in the reveries of my own imagination, among the beautiful scenery by which I was surrounded.

The villa stood in the midst of ornamented grounds, finely decorated with statues and fountains, and laid out into groves and alleys and shady bowers. It commanded a wide view of the Mediterranean, and the picturesque Ligurian coast. Everything was assembled here that could gratify the taste or agreeably occupy the mind. Soothed by the tranquillity of this elegant retreat, the turbulence of my feelings gradually subsided, and, blending with the romantic spell that still reigned over my imagination, produced a soft voluptuous melancholy.

I had not been long under the roof of the count when our solitude was enlivened by another inhabitant. It was a daughter of a relation of the count, who had lately died in reduced circumstances, bequeathing this only child to his protection. I had heard much of her beauty from Filippo, but my fancy had become so engrossed by one idea of beauty as not to admit of any other. We were in the central saloon of the villa when she arrived. She was still in mourning, and approached, leaning on the count's arm. As they ascended the marble portico, I was struck by the elegance of her figure and movement, by the grace with which the *mezzaro*, the bewitching veil of Genoa, was folded about her slender form. They entered. Heavens! what was my sur-

prise when I beheld Bianca before me. It was herself; pale with grief; but still more matured in loveliness than when I had last beheld her. The time that had elapsed had developed the graces of her person; and the sorrow she had undergone had diffused over her countenance an irresistible tenderness.

She blushed and trembled at seeing me, and tears rushed into her eyes, for she remembered in whose company she had been accustomed to behold me. For my part, I cannot express what were my emotions. By degrees I overcame the extreme shyness that had formerly paralyzed me in her presence. We were drawn together by sympathy of situation. We had each lost our best friend in the world; we were each, in some measure, thrown upon the kindness of others. When I came to know her intellectually, all my ideal picturings of her were confirmed. Her newness to the world, her delightful susceptibility to everything beautiful and agreeable in nature, reminded me of my own emotions when first I escaped from the convent. Her rectitude of thinking delighted my judgment; the sweetness of her nature wrapped itself round my heart; and then her young and tender and budding loveliness sent a delicious madness to my brain.

I gazed upon her with a kind of idolatry, as something more than mortal; and I felt humiliated at the idea of my comparative unworthiness. Yet she was mortal; and one of mortality's most susceptible and loving compounds; for she loved me!

How first I discovered the transporting truth I cannot recollect; I believe it stole upon me by degrees, as a wonder past hope or belief. We were both at such a tender and loving age; in constant intercourse with each other; mingling in the same elegant pursuits; for music, poetry, and painting were our mutual delights, and we were almost separated from society, among lovely and romantic scenery! Is it strange that two young hearts thus brought together should readily twine round each other?

Oh, gods! what a dream—a transient dream! of unalloyed

delight then passed over my soul! Then it was that the world around me was indeed a paradise, for I had woman—lovely, delicious woman, to share it with me. How often have I rambled over the picturesque shores of Sestri, or climbed its wild mountains, with the coast gemmed with villas, and the blue sea far below me, and the slender Pharo of Genoa on its romantic promontory in the distance; and as I sustained the faltering steps of Bianca, have thought there could no unhappiness enter into so beautiful a world. Why, oh, why is this budding season of life and love so transient—why is this rosy cloud of love that sheds such a glow over the morning of our days so prone to brew up into the whirlwind and the storm!

I was the first to awaken from this blissful delirium of the affections. I had gained Bianca's heart; what was I to do with it? I had no wealth nor prospects to entitle me to her hand. Was I to take advantage of her ignorance of the world, of her confiding affection, and draw her down to my own poverty? Was this requiting the hospitality of the count?—was this requiting the love of Bianca?

Now first I began to feel that even successful love may have its bitterness. A corroding care gathered about my heart. I moved about the palace like a guilty being. I felt as if I had abused its hospitality—as if I were a thief within its walls. I could no longer look with unembarrassed mien in the countenance of the count. I accused myself of perfidy to him, and I thought he read it in my looks and began to distrust and despise me. His manner had always been ostentatious and condescending, it now appeared cold and haughty. Filippo, too, became reserved and distant; or at least I suspected him to be so. Heavens!—was this mere coinage of my brain: was I to become suspicious of all the world?—a poor surmising wretch; watching looks and gestures, and torturing myself with misconstructions. Or if true—was I to remain beneath a roof where I was merely tolerated, and linger there on sufferance? “This is not to be endured!” exclaimed I; “I will tear myself from this state of self-abase-

ment; I will break through this fascination and fly. Fly?—whither?—from the world—for where is the world when I leave Bianca behind me!”

My spirit was naturally proud, and swelled within me at the idea of being looked upon with contumely. Many times I was on the point of declaring my family and rank, and asserting my equality, in the presence of Bianca, when I thought her relatives assumed an air of superiority. But the feeling was transient. I considered myself discarded and contemned by my family; and had solemnly vowed never to own relationship to them, until they themselves should claim it.

The struggle of my mind preyed upon my happiness and my health. It seemed as if the uncertainty of being loved would be less intolerable than thus to be assured of it, and yet not dare to enjoy the conviction. I was no longer the enraptured admirer of Bianca; I no longer hung in ecstasy on the tones of her voice, nor drank in with insatiate gaze the beauty of her countenance. Her very smiles ceased to delight me, for I felt culpable in having won them.

She could not but be sensible of the change in me, and inquired the cause with her usual frankness and simplicity. I could not evade the inquiry, for my heart was full to aching. I told her all the conflict of my soul; my devouring passion, my bitter self-upbraiding. “Yes!” said I, “I am unworthy of you. I am an offcast from my family—a wanderer—a nameless, homeless wanderer, with nothing but poverty for my portion, and yet I have dared to love you—have dared to aspire to your love!”

My agitation moved her to tears; but she saw nothing in my situation so hopeless as I had depicted it. Brought up in a convent, she knew nothing of the world, its wants, its cares—and indeed, what woman is a worldly casuist in matters of the heart!—Nay, more—she kindled into a sweet enthusiasm when she spoke of my fortunes and myself. We had dwelt together on the works of the famous masters. I had related to her their histories; the high reputation, the influence, the magnificence to which they had attained—the

companions of princes, the favorites of kings, the pride and boast of nations. All this she applied to me. Her love saw nothing in their greatest productions that I was not able to achieve; and when I saw the lovely creature glow with fervor, and her whole countenance radiant with the visions of my glory, which seemed breaking upon her, I was snatched up for the moment into the heaven of her own imagination.

I am dwelling too long upon this part of my story; yet I cannot help lingering over a period of my life on which, with all its cares and conflicts, I look back with fondness; for as yet my soul was unstained by a crime. I do not know what might have been the result of this struggle between pride, delicacy, and passion, had I not read in a Neapolitan gazette an account of the sudden death of my brother. It was accompanied by an earnest inquiry for intelligence concerning me, and a prayer, should this notice meet my eye, that I would hasten to Naples, to comfort an infirm and afflicted father.

I was naturally of an affectionate disposition; but my brother had never been as a brother to me; I had long considered myself as disconnected from him, and his death caused me but little emotion. The thoughts of my father, infirm and suffering, touched me, however, to the quick; and when I thought of him, that lofty magnificent being, now bowed down and desolate, and suing to me for comfort, all my resentment for past neglect was subdued, and a glow of filial affection was awakened within me.

The predominant feeling, however, that overpowered all others was transport at the sudden change in my whole fortunes. A home—a name—rank—wealth awaited me; and love painted a still more rapturous prospect in the distance. I hastened to Bianca, and threw myself at her feet. “Oh, Bianca,” exclaimed I, “at length I can claim you for my own. I am no longer a nameless adventurer, a neglected, rejected outcast. Look—read, behold the tidings that restore me to my name and to myself!”

I will not dwell on the scene that ensued. Bianca rejoiced

in the reverse of my situation, because she saw it lightened my heart of a load of care; for her own part she had loved me for myself, and had never doubted that my own merits would command both fame and fortune.

I now felt all my native pride buoyant within me. I no longer walked with my eyes bent to the dust; hope elevated them to the skies; my soul was lighted up with fresh fires, and beamed from my countenance.

I wished to impart the change in my circumstances to the count; to let him know who and what I was, and to make formal proposals for the hand of Bianca; but the count was absent on a distant estate. I opened my whole soul to Filippo. Now first I told him of my passion; of the doubts and fears that had distracted me, and of the tidings that had suddenly dispelled them. He overwhelmed me with congratulations and with the warmest expressions of sympathy. I embraced him in the fullness of my heart. I felt compunctious for having suspected him of coldness, and asked his forgiveness for having ever doubted his friendship.

Nothing is so warm and enthusiastic as a sudden expansion of the heart between young men. Filippo entered into our concerns with the most eager interest. He was our confidant and counselor. It was determined that I should hasten at once to Naples to re-establish myself in my father's affections and my paternal home, and the moment the reconciliation was effected and my father's consent insured, I should return and demand Bianca of the count. Filippo engaged to secure his father's acquiescence; indeed, he undertook to watch over our interests, and was the channel through which we were to correspond.

My parting with Bianca was tender—delicious—agonizing. It was in a little pavilion of the garden which had been one of our favorite resorts. How often and often did I return to have one more adieu—to have her look once more on me in speechless emotion—to enjoy once more the rapturous sight of those tears streaming down her lovely cheeks—to seize once more on that delicate hand, the frankly accorded

pledge of love, and cover it with tears and kisses! Heavens! There is a delight even in the parting agony of two lovers worth a thousand tame pleasures of the world. I have her at this moment before my eyes—at the window of the pavilion, putting aside the vines that clustered about the casement—her light form beaming forth in virgin white—her countenance all tears and smiles—sending a thousand and a thousand adieus after me, as, hesitating, in a delirium of fondness and agitation, I faltered my way down the avenue.

As the bark bore me out of the harbor of Genoa, how eagerly my eyes stretched along the coast of Sestri, till it discerned the villa gleaming from among trees at the foot of the mountain. As long as day lasted, I gazed and gazed upon it, till it lessened and lessened to a mere white speck in the distance; and still my intense and fixed gaze discerned it, when all other objects of the coast had blended into indistinct confusion, or were lost in the evening gloom.

On arriving at Naples, I hastened to my paternal home. My heart yearned for the long-withheld blessing of a father's love. As I entered the proud portal of the ancestral palace, my emotions were so great that I could not speak. No one knew me. The servants gazed at me with curiosity and surprise. A few years of intellectual elevation and development had made a prodigious change in the poor fugitive stripling from the convent. Still that no one should know me in my rightful home was overpowering. I felt like the prodigal son returned. I was a stranger in the house of my father. I burst into tears, and wept aloud. When I made myself known, however, all was changed. I who had once been almost repulsed from its walls, and forced to fly as an exile, was welcomed back with acclamation, with servility. One of the servants hastened to prepare my father for my reception; my eagerness to receive the paternal embrace was so great that I could not await his return, but hurried after him.

What a spectacle met my eyes as I entered the chamber. My father, whom I had left in the pride of vigorous age,

whose noble and majestic bearing had so awed my young imagination, was bowed down and withered into decrepitude. A paralysis had ravaged his stately form, and left it a shaking ruin. He sat propped up in his chair, with pale, relaxed visage and glassy, wandering eye. His intellects had evidently shared in the ravage of his frame. The servant was endeavoring to make him comprehend the visitor that was at hand. I tottered up to him and sunk at his feet. All his past coldness and neglect were forgotten in his present sufferings. I remembered only that he was my parent, and that I had deserted him. I clasped his knees; my voice was almost stifled with convulsive sobs. "Pardon—pardon—oh my father!" was all that I could utter. His apprehension seemed slowly to return to him. He gazed at me for some moments with a vague, inquiring look; a convulsive tremor quivered about his lips; he feebly extended a shaking hand, laid it upon my head, and burst into an infantine flow of tears.

From that moment he would scarcely spare me from his sight. I appeared the only object that his heart responded to in the world: all else was as a blank to him. He had almost lost the powers of speech, and the reasoning faculty seemed at an end. He was mute and passive; excepting that fits of child-like weeping would sometimes come over him without any immediate cause. If I left the room at any time, his eye was incessantly fixed on the door till my return, and on my entrance there was another gush of tears.

To talk with him of my concerns in this ruined state of mind would have been worse than useless: to have left him, for ever so short a time, would have been cruel, unnatural. Here then was a new trial for my affections. I wrote to Bianca an account of my return and of my actual situation; painting in colors vivid, for they were true, the torments I suffered at our being thus separated; for to the youthful lover every day of absence is an age of love lost. I inclosed the letter in one to Filippo, who was the channel of our correspondence. I received a reply from him full of friendship

and sympathy; from Bianca full of assurances of affection and constancy.

Week after week, month after month elapsed, without making any change in my circumstances. The vital flame, which had seemed nearly extinct when first I met my father, kept fluttering on without any apparent diminution. I watched him constantly, faithfully—I had almost said patiently. I knew that his death alone would set me free; yet I never at any moment wished it. I felt too glad to be able to make any atonement for past disobedience; and, denied as I had been all endearments of relationship in my early days, my heart yearned toward a father who, in his age and helplessness, had thrown himself entirely on me for comfort. My passion for Bianca gained daily more force from absence; by constant meditation it wore itself a deeper and deeper channel. I made no new friends nor acquaintance; sought none of the pleasures of Naples which my rank and fortune threw open to me. Mine was a heart that confined itself to few objects, but dwelt upon those with the intenser passion. To sit by my father, and administer to his wants, and to meditate on Bianca in the silence of his chamber, was my constant habit. Sometimes I amused myself with my pencil in portraying the image that was ever present to my imagination. I transferred to canvas every look and smile of hers that dwelt in my heart. I showed them to my father in hopes of awakening an interest in his bosom for the mere shadow of my love; but he was too far sunk in intellect to take any more than a childlike notice of them.

When I received a letter from Bianca it was a new source of solitary luxury. Her letters, it is true, were less and less frequent, but they were always full of assurances of unabated affection. They breathed not the frank and innocent warmth with which she expressed herself in conversation, but I accounted for it from the embarrassment which inexperienced minds have often to express themselves upon paper. Filippo assured me of her unaltered constancy. They both lamented in the strongest terms our continued separation, though they



THE DEATH OF FLIPPO.

Irving, Vol. Two, p. 330.

did justice to the filial feeling that kept me by my father's side.

Nearly eighteen months elapsed in this protracted exile. To me they were so many ages. Ardent and impetuous by nature, I scarcely know how I should have supported so long an absence, had I not felt assured that the faith of Bianca was equal to my own. At length my father died. Life went from him almost imperceptibly. I hung over him in mute affliction, and watched the expiring spasms of nature. His last faltering accents whispered repeatedly a blessing on me—alas! how has it been fulfilled!

When I had paid due honors to his remains, and laid them in the tomb of our ancestors, I arranged briefly my affairs; put them in a posture to be easily at my command from a distance, and embarked once more, with a bounding heart, for Genoa.

Our voyage was propitious, and oh! what was my rapture when first, in the dawn of morning, I saw the shadowy summits of the Apennines rising almost like clouds above the horizon. The sweet breath of summer just moved us over the long wavering billows that were rolling us on toward Genoa. By degrees the coast of Sestri rose like a sweet creation of enchantment from the silver bosom of the deep. I beheld the line of villages and palaces studding its borders. My eye reverted to a well-known point, and at length, from the confusion of distant objects, it singled out the villa which contained Bianca. It was a mere speck in the landscape, but glimmering from afar, the polar star of my heart.

Again I gazed at it for a livelong summer's day; but oh how different the emotions between departure and return. It now kept growing and growing, instead of lessening and lessening on my sight. My heart seemed to dilate with it. I looked at it through a telescope. I gradually defined one feature after another. The balconies of the central saloon where first I met Bianca beneath its roof; the terrace where we so often had passed the delightful summer evenings; the awning that shaded her chamber window—I almost fancied

I saw her form beneath it. Could she but know her lover was in the bark whose white sail now gleamed on the sunny bosom of the sea! My fond impatience increased as we neared the coast. The ship seemed to lag lazily over the billows; I could almost have sprung into the sea and swum to the desired shore.

The shadows of evening gradually shrouded the scene; but the moon arose in all her fullness and beauty, and shed the tender light so dear to lovers over the romantic coast of Sestri. My whole soul was bathed in unutterable tenderness. I anticipated the heavenly evenings I should pass in wandering with Bianca by the light of that blessed moon.

It was late at night before we entered the harbor. As early next morning as I could get released from the formalities of landing I threw myself on horseback and hastened to the villa. As I galloped round the rocky promontory on which stands the Faro, and saw the coast of Sestri opening upon me, a thousand anxieties and doubts suddenly sprang up in my bosom. There is something fearful in returning to those we love, while yet uncertain what ills or changes absence may have effected. The turbulence of my agitation shook my very frame. I spurred my horse to redoubled speed; he was covered with foam when we both arrived panting at the gateway that opened to the grounds around the villa. I left my horse at a cottage and walked through the grounds, that I might regain tranquillity for the approaching interview. I chid myself for having suffered mere doubts and surmises thus suddenly to overcome me; but I was always prone to be carried away by these gusts of the feelings.

On entering the garden everything bore the same look as when I had left it; and this unchanged aspect of things reassured me. There were the alleys in which I had so often walked with Bianca; the same shades under which we had so often sat during the noontide heat. There were the same flowers of which she was fond; and which appeared still to be under the ministry of her hand. Everything around

looked and breathed of Bianca; hope and joy flushed in my bosom at every step. I passed a little bower in which we had often sat and read together. A book and a glove lay on the bench. It was Bianca's glove; it was a volume of the *Metestasio* I had given her. The glove lay in my favorite passage. I clasped them to my heart. "All is safe!" exclaimed I, with rapture, "she loves me! she is still my own!"

I bounded lightly along the avenue down which I had faltered so slowly at my departure. I beheld her favorite pavilion which had witnessed our parting scene. The window was open, with the same vine clambering about it, precisely as when she waved and wept me an adieu. Oh! how transporting was the contrast in my situation. As I passed near the pavilion, I heard the tones of a female voice. They thrilled through me with an appeal to my heart not to be mistaken. Before I could think I *felt* they were Bianca's. For an instant I paused, overpowered with agitation. I feared to break in suddenly upon her. I softly ascended the steps of the pavilion. The door was open. I saw Bianca seated at a table; her back was toward me; she was warbling a soft melancholy air, and was occupied in drawing. A glance sufficed to show me that she was copying one of my own paintings. I gazed on her for a moment in a delicious tumult of emotions. She paused in her singing; a heavy sigh, almost a sob followed. I could no longer contain myself. "Bianca!" exclaimed I, in a half smothered voice. She started at the sound; brushed back the ringlets that hung clustering about her face; darted a glance at me; uttered a piercing shriek, and would have fallen to the earth had I not caught her in my arms.

"Bianca! my own Bianca!" exclaimed I, folding her to my bosom; my voice stifled in sobs of convulsive joy. She lay in my arms without sense or motion. Alarmed at the effects of my own precipitation, I scarce knew what to do. I tried by a thousand endearing words to call her back to consciousness. She slowly recovered, and half opening her

eyes—"Where am I?" murmured she faintly. "Here," exclaimed I, pressing her to my bosom. "Here! close to the heart that adores you; in the arms of your faithful Ottavio!"

"Oh, no! no! no!" shrieked she, starting into sudden life and terror—"away! away! leave me! leave me!"

She tore herself from my arms; rushed to a corner of the saloon, and covered her face with her hands, as if the very sight of me were baleful. I was thunderstruck—I could not believe my senses. I followed her, trembling, confounded. I endeavored to take her hand, but she shrunk from my very touch with horror.

"Good heavens, Bianca," exclaimed I, "what is the meaning of this? Is this my reception after so long an absence? Is this the love you professed for me?"

At the mention of love, a shuddering ran through her. She turned to me a face wild with anguish. "No more of that! no more of that!" gasped she—"talk not to me of love—I—I—am married!"

I reeled as if I had received a mortal blow. A sickness struck to my very heart. I caught at a window frame for support. For a moment or two everything was chaos around me. When I recovered, I beheld Bianca lying on a sofa; her face buried in the pillow and sobbing convulsively. Indignation at her fickleness for a moment overpowered every other feeling.

"Faithless—perjured—" cried I, striding across the room. But another glance at that beautiful being in distress checked all my wrath. Anger could not dwell together with her idea in my soul.

"Oh, Bianca!" exclaimed I, in anguish, "could I have dreamed of this; could I have suspected you would have been false to me?"

She raised her face all streaming with tears, all disordered with emotion, and gave me one appealing look—"False to you!—they told me you were dead!"

"What," said I, "in spite of our constant correspondence?"

She gazed wildly at me: "Correspondence!—what correspondence?"

"Have you not repeatedly received and replied to my letters?"

She clasped her hands with solemnity and fervor: "As I hope for mercy, never!"

A horrible surmise shot through my brain: "Who told you I was dead?"

"It was reported that the ship in which you embarked for Naples perished at sea."

"But who told you the report?"

She paused for an instant, and trembled—

"Filippo!"

"May the God of heaven curse him!" cried I, extending my clinched fists aloft.

"Oh, do not curse him—do not curse him!" exclaimed she—"He is—he is—my husband!"

This was all that was wanting to unfold the perfidy that had been practiced upon me. My blood boiled like liquid fire in my veins. I gasped with rage too great for utterance. I remained for a time bewildered by the whirl of horrible thoughts that rushed through my mind. The poor victim of deception before me thought it was with her I was incensed. She faintly murmured forth her exculpation. I will not dwell upon it. I saw in it more than she meant to reveal. I saw with a glance how both of us had been betrayed. "'Tis well!" muttered I to myself in smothered accents of concentrated fury. "He shall account to me for this!"

Bianca overheard me. New terror flashed in her countenance. "For mercy's sake do not meet him—say nothing of what has passed—for my sake say nothing to him—I only shall be the sufferer!"

A new suspicion darted across my mind: "What!" exclaimed I; "do you then *fear* him—is he *unkind* to you—tell me," reiterated I, grasping her hand and looking her eagerly in the face—"tell me—*dares* he to use you harshly?"

"No! no! no!" cried she faltering and embarrassed; but

the glance at her face had told me volumes. I saw in her pallid and wasted features, in the prompt terror and subdued agony of her eye, a whole history of a mind broken down by tyranny. Great God! and was this beauteous flower snatched from me to be thus trampled upon? The idea roused me to madness. I clinched my teeth and my hands; I foamed at the mouth; every passion seemed to have resolved itself into the fury that like a lava boiled within my heart. Bianca shrunk from me in speechless affright. As I strode by the window my eye darted down the alley. Fatal moment! I beheld Filippo at a distance! My brain was in delirium—I sprang from the pavilion, and was before him with the quickness of lightning. He saw me as I came rushing upon him—he turned pale, looked wildly to right and left, as if he would have fled, and trembling drew his sword:

“Wretch!” cried I, “well may you draw your weapon!”

I spoke not another word—I snatched forth a stiletto, put by the sword which trembled in his hand, and buried my poniard in his bosom. He fell with the blow, but my rage was unsated. I sprang upon him with the blood-thirsty feeling of a tiger: redoubled my blows, mangled him in my frenzy, grasped him by the throat, until with reiterated wounds and strangling convulsions he expired in my grasp. I remained glaring on the countenance, horrible in death, that seemed to stare back with its protruded eyes upon me. Piercing shrieks roused me from my delirium. I looked round and beheld Bianca flying distractedly toward us. My brain whirled. I waited not to meet her, but fled from the scene of horror. I fled forth from the garden like another Cain, a hell within my bosom and a curse upon my head. I fled without knowing whither—almost without knowing why—my only idea was to get further and further from the horrors I had left behind; as if I could throw space between myself and my conscience. I fled to the Apennines, and wandered for days and days among their savage heights. How I existed I cannot tell—what rocks and precipices I

braved, and how I braved them, I know not. I kept on and on—trying to outtravel the curse that clung to me. Alas, the shrieks of Bianca rung forever in my ear. The horrible countenance of my victim was forever before my eyes. “The blood of Filippo cried to me from the ground.” Rocks, trees, and torrents all resounded with my crime.

Then it was I felt how much more insupportable is the anguish of remorse than every other mental pang. Oh! could I but have cast off this crime that festered in my heart; could I but have regained the innocence that reigned in my breast as I entered the garden at Sestri; could I but have restored my victim to life, I felt as if I could look on with transport even though Bianca were in his arms.

By degrees this frenzied fever of remorse settled into a permanent malady of the mind. Into one of the most horrible that ever poor wretch was cursed with. Wherever I went, the countenance of him I had slain appeared to follow me. Wherever I turned my head I beheld it behind me, hideous with the contortions of the dying moment. I have tried in every way to escape from this horrible phantom; but in vain. I know not whether it is an illusion of the mind, the consequence of my dismal education at the convent, or whether a phantom really sent by heaven to punish me; but there it ever is—at all times—in all places—nor has time nor habit had any effect in familiarizing me with its terrors. I have traveled from place to place, plunged into amusements—tried dissipation and distraction of every kind—all—all in vain.

I once had recourse to my pencil as a desperate experiment. I painted an exact resemblance of this phantom face. I placed it before me in hopes that by constantly contemplating the copy I might diminish the effect of the original. But I only doubled instead of diminishing the misery.

Such is the curse that has clung to my footsteps—that has made my life a burden—but the thoughts of death, terrible. God knows what I have suffered. What days and days, and nights and nights, of sleepless torment. What a never-dying worm has preyed upon my heart; what an unquenchable fire

has burned within my brain. He knows the wrongs that wrought upon my poor weak nature; that converted the tenderest of affections into the deadliest of fury. He knows best whether a frail erring creature has expiated by long-enduring torture and measureless remorse the crime of a moment of madness. Often, often have I prostrated myself in the dust, and implored that He would give me a sign of His forgiveness, and let me die.——

Thus far had I written some time since. I had meant to leave this record of misery and crime with you, to be read when I should be no more. My prayer to Heaven has at length been heard. You were witness to my emotions last evening at the performance of the Miserere; when the vaulted temple resounded with the words of atonement and redemption. I heard a voice speaking to me from the midst of the music; I heard it rising above the pealing of the organ and the voices of the choir; it spoke to me in tones of celestial melody; it promised mercy and forgiveness, but demanded from me full expiation. I go to make it. To-morrow I shall be on my way to Genoa to surrender myself to justice. You who have pitied my sufferings; who have poured the balm of sympathy into my wounds, do not shrink from my memory with abhorrence now that you know my story. Recollect, when you read of my crime I shall have atoned for it with my blood!

When the baronet had finished, there was a universal desire expressed to see the painting of this frightful visage. After much entreaty the baronet consented, on condition that they should only visit it one by one. He called his housekeeper and gave her charge to conduct the gentlemen singly to the chamber. They all returned varying in their stories: some affected in one way, some in another; some more, some less; but all agreeing that there was a certain something about the painting that had a very odd effect upon the feelings.

I stood in a deep bow window with the baronet, and could

not help expressing my wonder. "After all," said I, "there are certain mysteries in our nature, certain inscrutable impulses and influences, that warrant one in being superstitious. Who can account for so many persons of different characters being thus strangely affected by a mere painting?"

"And especially when not one of them has seen it!" said the baronet with a smile.

"How?" exclaimed I, "not seen it?"

"Not one of them!" replied he, laying his finger on his lips in sign of secrecy. "I saw that some of them were in a bantering vein, and I did not choose that the memento of the poor Italian should be made a jest of. So I gave the house-keeper a hint to show them all to a different chamber!"

Thus end the Stories of the Nervous Gentleman.

PART SECOND

BUCKTHORNE AND HIS FRIENDS

"'Tis a very good world that we live in,
To lend, or to spend, or to give in;
But to beg, or to borrow, or get a man's own,
'Tis the very worst world, sir, that ever was
known."—*Lines from an Inn Window*

LITERARY LIFE

AMONG the great variety of characters which fall in a traveler's way, I became acquainted, during my sojourn in London, with an eccentric personage of the name of Buckthorne. He was a literary man, had lived much in the metropolis, and had acquired a great deal of curious though unprofitable knowledge concerning it. He was a great ob-

server of character, and could give the natural history of every odd animal that presented itself in this great wilderness of men. Finding me very curious about literary life and literary characters, he took much pains to gratify my curiosity.

"The literary world of England," said he to me one day, "is made up of a number of little fraternities, each existing merely for itself, and thinking the rest of the world created only to look on and admire. It may be resembled to the firmament, consisting of a number of systems, each composed of its own central sun with its revolving train of moons and satellites, all acting in the most harmonious concord, but the comparison fails in part, inasmuch as the literary world has no general concord. Each system acts independently of the rest, and indeed considers all other stars as mere exhalations and transient meteors, beaming for a while with false fires, but doomed soon to fall and be forgotten; while its own luminaries are the lights of the universe, destined to increase in splendor and to shine steadily on to immortality."

"And pray," said I, "how is a man to get a peep into one of these systems you talk of? I presume an intercourse with authors is a kind of intellectual exchange, where one must bring his commodities to barter, and always give a *quid pro quo*."

"Pooh, pooh—how you mistake," said Buckthorne, smiling; "you must never think to become popular among wits by shining. They go into society to shine themselves, not to admire the brilliancy of others. I thought as you do when I first cultivated the society of men of letters, and never went to a blue-stocking coterie without studying my part beforehand as diligently as an actor. The consequence was, I soon got the name of an intolerable proser, and should in a little while have been completely excommunicated had I not changed my plan of operations. From thenceforth I became a most assiduous listener, or if ever I were eloquent it was *tete-a-tete* with an author in praise of his own works, or, what is nearly as acceptable, in disparagement of the

works of his contemporaries. If ever he spoke favorably of the productions of some particular friend, I ventured boldly to dissent from him, and to prove that his friend was a block-head; and much as people say of the pertinacity and irritability of authors, I never found one to take offense at my contradictions. No, no, sir, authors are particularly candid in admitting the faults of their friends.

“Indeed, I was extremely sparing of my remarks on all modern works, excepting to make sarcastic observations on the most distinguished writers of the day. I never ventured to praise an author that had not been dead at least half a century; and even then I was rather cautious; for you must know that many old writers have been enlisted under the banners of different sects, and their merits have become as complete topics of party prejudice and dispute as the merits of living statesmen and politicians. Nay, there have been whole periods of literature absolutely *taboo’d*, to use a South Sea phrase. It is, for example, as much as a man’s reputation is worth, in some circles, to say a word in praise of any writers of the reign of Charles the Second, or even of Queen Anne; they being all declared to be Frenchmen in disguise.”

“And pray, then,” said I, “when am I to know that I am on safe grounds; being totally unacquainted with the literary landmarks and the boundary lines of fashionable taste?”

“Oh,” replied he, “there is fortunately one tract of literature that forms a kind of neutral ground, on which all the literary world meet amicably; lay down their weapons and even run riot in their excess of good humor; and this is the reigns of Elizabeth and James. Here you may praise away at a venture; here it is ‘cut and come again,’ and the more obscure the author, and the more quaint and crabbed his style, the more your admiration will smack of the real relish of the connoisseur; whose taste, like that of an epicure, is always for game that has an antiquated flavor.

“But,” continued he, “as you seem anxious to know something of literary society, I will take an opportunity to

introduce you to some coterie, where the talents of the day are assembled. I cannot promise you, however, that they will be of the first order. Somehow or other, our great geniuses are not gregarious, they do not go in flocks, but fly singly in general society. They prefer mingling, like common men, with the multitude; and are apt to carry nothing of the author about them but the reputation. It is only the inferior orders that herd together, acquire strength and importance by their confederacies, and bear all the distinctive characteristics of their species."

A LITERARY DINNER

A FEW days after this conversation with Mr. Buckthorne, he called upon me, and took me with him to a regular literary dinner. It was given by a great bookseller, or rather a company of booksellers, whose firm surpassed in length even that of Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego.

I was surprised to find between twenty and thirty guests assembled, most of whom I had never seen before. Buckthorne explained this to me by informing me that this was a "business dinner," or kind of field day, which the house gave about twice a year to its authors. It is true, they did occasionally give snug dinners to three or four literary men at a time, but then these were generally select authors; favorites of the public; such as had arrived at their sixth and seventh editions. "There are," said he, "certain geographical boundaries in the land of literature, and you may judge tolerably well of an author's popularity by the wine his bookseller gives him. An author crosses the port line about the third edition and gets into claret, but when he has reached the sixth and seventh, he may revel in champagne and burgundy."

"And pray," said I, "how far may these gentlemen have reached that I see around me; are any of these claret drinkers?"

“Not exactly, not exactly. You find at these great dinners the common steady run of authors, one, two, edition men; or if any others are invited they are aware that it is a kind of republican meeting.—You understand me—a meeting of the republic of letters, and that they must expect nothing but plain substantial fare.”

These hints enabled me to comprehend more fully the arrangement of the table. The two ends were occupied by two partners of the house. And the host seemed to have adopted Addison’s ideas as to the literary precedence of his guests. A popular poet had the post of honor, opposite to whom was a hot-pressed traveler in quarto, with plates. A grave-looking antiquarian, who had produced several solid works, which were much quoted and little read, was treated with great respect, and seated next to a neat, dressy gentleman in black, who had written a thin, genteel, hot-pressed octavo on political economy that was getting into fashion. Several three-volume duodecimo men of fair currency were placed about the center of the table; while the lower end was taken up with small poets, translators, and authors, who had not as yet risen into much notice.

The conversation during dinner was by fits and starts; breaking out here and there in various parts of the table in small flashes, and ending in smoke. The poet, who had the confidence of a man on good terms with the world and independent of his bookseller, was very gay and brilliant, and said many clever things, which set the partner next him in a roar, and delighted all the company. The other partner, however, maintained his sedateness, and kept carving on, with the air of a thorough man of business, intent upon the occupation of the moment. His gravity was explained to me by my friend Buckthorne. He informed me that the concerns of the house were admirably distributed among the partners. “Thus, for instance,” said he, “the grave gentleman is the carving partner who attends to the joints and the other is the laughing partner who attends to the jokes.”

The general conversation was chiefly carried on at the

upper end of the table; as the authors there seemed to possess the greatest courage of the tongue. As to the crew at the lower end, if they did not make much figure in talking, they did in eating. Never was there a more determined, inveterate, thoroughly sustained attack on the trencher, than by this phalanx of masticators. When the cloth was removed, and the wine began to circulate, they grew very merry and jocose among themselves. Their jokes, however, if by chance any of them reached the upper end of the table, seldom produced much effect. Even the laughing partner did not seem to think it necessary to honor them with a smile; which my neighbor Buckthorne accounted for, by informing me that there was a certain degree of popularity to be obtained, before a bookseller could afford to laugh at an author's jokes.

Among this crew of questionable gentlemen thus seated below the salt, my eye singled out one in particular. He was rather shabbily dressed; though he had evidently made the most of a rusty black coat, and wore his shirt-frill plaited and puffed out voluminously at the bosom. His face was dusky, but florid—perhaps a little too florid, particularly about the nose, though the rosy hue gave the greater luster to a twinkling black eye. He had a little the look of a boon companion, with that dash of the poor devil in it which gives an inexpressibly mellow tone to a man's humor. I had seldom seen a face of richer promise; but never was promise so ill kept. He said nothing; ate and drank with the keen appetite of a gazetteer, and scarcely stopped to laugh even at the good jokes from the upper end of the table. I inquired who he was. Buckthorne looked at him attentively. "Gad," said he, "I have seen that face before, but where I cannot recollect. He cannot be an author of any note. I suppose some writer of sermons or grinder of foreign travels."

After dinner we retired to another room to take tea and coffee, where we were re-enforced by a cloud of inferior guests. Authors of small volumes in boards, and pamphlets stitched in blue paper. These had not as yet arrived to

the importance of a dinner invitation, but were invited occasionally to pass the evening "in a friendly way." They were very respectful to the partners, and indeed seemed to stand a little in awe of them; but they paid very devoted court to the lady of the house, and were extravagantly fond of the children. I looked round for the poor devil author in the rusty black coat and magnificent frill, but he had disappeared immediately after leaving the table; having a dread, no doubt, of the glaring light of a drawing-room. Finding nothing further to interest my attention, I took my departure as soon as coffee had been served, leaving the port and the thin, genteel, hot-pressed, octavo gentlemen masters of the field.

THE CLUB OF QUEER FELLOWS

I THINK it was but the very next evening that, in coming out of Covent Garden Theater with my eccentric friend Buckthorne, he proposed to give me another peep at life and character. Finding me willing for any research of the kind, he took me through a variety of the narrow courts and lanes about Covent Garden, until we stopped before a tavern from which we heard the bursts of merriment of a jovial party. There would be a loud peal of laughter, then an interval, then another peal, as if a prime wag were telling a story. After a little while there was a song, and at the close of each stanza a hearty roar and a vehement thumping on the table.

"This is the place," whispered Buckthorne. "It is the 'Club of Queer Fellows.' A great resort of the small wits, third-rate actors, and newspaper critics of the theaters. Any one can go in on paying a shilling at the bar for the use of the club."

We entered, therefore, without ceremony, and took our seats at a long table in a dusky corner of the room. The club was assembled round a table, on which stood beverages of various kinds, according to the taste of the individual. The

members were a set of queer fellows indeed; but what was my surprise on recognizing in the prime wit of the meeting the poor devil author whom I had remarked at the booksellers' dinner for his promising face and his complete taciturnity. Matters, however, were entirely changed with him. There he was a mere cipher: here he was lord of the ascendant; the choice spirit, the dominant genius. He sat at the head of the table with his hat on, and an eye beaming even more luminously than his nose. He had a quiz and a flip for every one, and a good thing on every occasion. Nothing could be said or done without eliciting a spark from him; and I solemnly declare I have heard much worse wit even from noblemen. His jokes, it must be confessed, were rather wet, but they suited the circle in which he presided. The company were in that maudlin mood when a little wit goes a great way. Every time he opened his lips there was sure to be a roar, and sometimes before he had time to speak.

We were fortunate enough to enter in time for a glee composed by him expressly for the club, and which he sang with two boon companions, who would have been worthy subjects for Hogarth's pencil. As they were each provided with a written copy, I was enabled to procure the reading of it.

Merrily, merrily push round the glass
And merrily troll the glee,
For he who won't drink till he wink is an ass,
So neighbor I drink to thee.
Merrily, merrily puddle thy nose,
Until it right rosy shall be;
For a jolly red nose, I speak under the rose,
Is a sign of good company.

We waited until the party broke up, and no one but the wit remained. He sat at the table with his legs stretched under it, and wide apart; his hands in his breeches pockets; his head drooped upon his breast; and gazing with lack-luster countenance on an empty tankard. His gayety was gone, his fire completely quenched.

My companion approached and startled him from his fit of brown study, introducing himself on the strength of their having dined together at the booksellers'.

"By the way," said he, "it seems to me I have seen you before; your face is surely the face of an old acquaintance, though for the life of me I cannot tell where I have known you."

"Very likely," replied he with a smile: "many of my old friends have forgotten me. Though, to tell the truth, my memory in this instance is as bad as your own. If, however, it will assist your recollection in any way, my name is Thomas Dribble, at your service."

"What, Tom Dribble, who was at old Birchell's school in Warwickshire?"

"The same," said the other, coolly.

"Why, then we are old schoolmates, though it's no wonder you don't recollect me. I was your junior by several years; don't you recollect little Jack Buckthorne?"

Here then ensued a scene of schoolfellow recognition; and a world of talk about old school times and school pranks. Mr. Dribble ended by observing, with a heavy sigh, "that times were sadly changed since those days."

"Faith, Mr. Dribble," said I, "you seem quite a different man here from what you were at dinner. I had no idea that you had so much stuff in you. There you were all silence; but here you absolutely keep the table in a roar."

"Ah, my dear sir," replied he, with a shake of the head and a shrug of the shoulder, "I'm a mere glowworm. I never shine by daylight. Besides, it's a hard thing for a poor devil of an author to shine at the table of a rich bookseller. Who do you think would laugh at anything I could say, when I had some of the current wits of the day about me? But here, though a poor devil, I am among still poorer devils than myself; men who look up to me as a man of letters and a bel esprit, and all my jokes pass as sterling gold from the mint."

"You surely do yourself injustice, sir," said I; "I have

certainly heard more good things from you this evening than from any of those beaux esprits by whom you appear to have been so daunted."

"Ah, sir! but they have luck on their side; they are in the fashion—there's nothing like being in fashion. A man that has once got his character up for a wit is always sure of a laugh, say what he may. He may utter as much nonsense as he pleases, and all will pass current. No one stops to question the coin of a rich man; but a poor devil cannot pass off either a joke or a guinea without its being examined on both sides. Wit and coin are always doubted with a threadbare coat.

"For my part," continued he, giving his hat a twitch a little more on one side, "for my part, I hate your fine dinners; there's nothing, sir, like the freedom of a chop-house. I'd rather, any time, have my steak and tankard among my own set, than drink claret and eat venison with your cursed civil, elegant company, who never laugh at a good joke from a poor devil, for fear of its being vulgar. A good joke grows in a wet soil; it flourishes in low places, but withers on your d—d high, dry grounds. I once kept high company, sir, until I nearly ruined myself; I grew so dull, and vapid, and genteel. Nothing saved me but being arrested by my landlady and thrown into prison; where a course of catch-clubs, eight-penny ale, and poor-devil company, manured my mind and brought it back to itself again."

As it was now growing late we parted for the evening; though I felt anxious to know more of this practical philosopher. I was glad, therefore, when Buckthorne proposed to have another meeting to talk over old school times, and inquired his schoolmate's address. The latter seemed at first a little shy of naming his lodgings; but suddenly assuming an air of hardihood—"Green Arbor Court, sir," exclaimed he; "number — in Green Arbor Court. You must know the place. Classic ground, sir! classic ground! It was there Goldsmith wrote his 'Vicar of Wakefield.' I always like to live in literary haunts."

I was amused with this whimsical apology for shabby quarters. On our way homeward Buckthorne assured me that this Dribble had been the prime wit and great wag of the school in their boyish days, and one of those unlucky urchins denominated bright geniuses. As he perceived me curious respecting his old schoolmate, he promised to take me with him in his proposed visit to Green Arbor Court.

A few mornings afterward he called upon me, and we set forth on our expedition. He led me through a variety of singular alleys, and courts, and blind passages; for he appeared to be profoundly versed in all the intricate geography of the metropolis. At length we came out upon Fleet Market, and traversing it, turned up a narrow street to the bottom of a long steep flight of stone steps, named Break-neck Stairs. These, he told me, led up to Green Arbor Court, and that down them poor Goldsmith might many a time have risked his neck. When we entered the court, I could not but smile to think in what out-of-the-way corners genius produces her bantlings! And the muses, those capricious dames, who, forsooth, so often refuse to visit palaces, and deny a single smile to votaries in splendid studies and gilded drawing-rooms—what holes and burrows will they frequent to lavish their favors on some ragged disciple!

This Green Arbor Court I found to be a small square of tall and miserable houses, the very intestines of which seemed turned inside out, to judge from the old garments and frippery that fluttered from every window. It appeared to be a region of washerwomen, and lines were stretched about the little square, on which clothes were dangling to dry. Just as we entered the square, a scuffle took place between two viragos about a disputed right to a washtub, and immediately the whole community was in a hubbub. Heads in mob caps popped out of every window, and such a clamor of tongues ensued that I was fain to stop my ears. Every Amazon took part with one or other of the disputants, and brandished her arms dripping with soapsuds, and fired away from her window as from the embrasure of a fortress; while the swarms

of children nestled and cradled in every procreant chamber of this hive, waking with the noise, set up their shrill pipes to swell the general concert.

Poor Goldsmith! what a time must he have had of it, with his quiet disposition and nervous habits, penned up in this den of noise and vulgarity. How strange that while every sight and sound was sufficient to imbitter the heart and fill it with misanthropy, his pen should be dropping the honey of Hybla. Yet it is more than probable that he drew many of his inimitable pictures of low life from the scenes which surrounded him in this abode. The circumstance of Mrs. Tibbs being obliged to wash her husband's two shirts in a neighbor's house, who refused to lend her washtub, may have been no sport of fancy, but a fact passing under his own eye. His landlady may have set for the picture; and Beau Tibbs' scanty wardrobe have been a facsimile of his own.

It was with some difficulty that we found our way to Dribble's lodgings. They were up two pair of stairs, in a room that looked upon the court, and when we entered he was seated on the edge of his bed, writing at a broken table. He received us, however, with a free, open, poor devil air that was irresistible. It is true he did at first appear slightly confused; buttoned up his waistcoat a little higher and tucked in a stray frill of linen. But he recollected himself in an instant; gave a half swagger, half leer, as he stepped forth to receive us; drew a three-legged stool for Mr. Buckthorne; pointed me to a lumbering old damask chair that looked like a dethroned monarch in exile, and bade us welcome to his garret.

We soon got engaged in conversation. Buckthorne and he had much to say about early school scenes; and as nothing opens a man's heart more than recollections of the kind, we soon drew from him a brief outline of his literary career.

THE POOR DEVIL AUTHOR

I BEGAN life unluckily by being the wag and bright fellow at school; and I had the further misfortune of becoming the great genius of my native village. My father was a country attorney, and intended that I should succeed him in business; but I had too much genius to study, and he was too fond of my genius to force it into the traces. So I fell into bad company and took to bad habits. Do not mistake me. I mean that I fell into the company of village literati and village blues, and took to writing village poetry.

It was quite the fashion in the village to be literary. We had a little knot of choice spirits who assembled frequently together, formed ourselves into a Literary, Scientific and Philosophical Society, and fancied ourselves the most learned philos in existence. Every one had a great character assigned him, suggested by some casual habit or affectation. One heavy fellow drank an enormous quantity of tea; rolled in his armchair, talked sententiously, pronounced dogmatically, and was considered a second Dr. Johnson; another, who happened to be a curate, uttered coarse jokes, wrote doggerel rhymes, and was the Swift of our association. Thus we had also our Popes and Goldsmiths and Addisons, and a blue-stocking lady, whose drawing-room we frequented, who corresponded about nothing with all the world, and wrote letters with the stiffness and formality of a printed book, was cried up as another Mrs. Montagu. I was, by common consent, the juvenile prodigy, the poetical youth, the great genius, the pride and hope of the village, through whom it was to become one day as celebrated as Stratford-on-Avon.

My father died and left me his blessing and his business. His blessing brought no money into my pocket; and as to his

business it soon deserted me: for I was busy writing poetry, and could not attend to law; and my clients, though they had great respect for my talents, had no faith in a poetical attorney.

I lost my business, therefore, spent my money and finished my poem. It was the "Pleasures of Melancholy," and was cried up to the skies by the whole circle. The "Pleasures of Imagination," the "Pleasures of Hope," and the "Pleasures of Memory," though each had placed its author in the first rank of poets, were blank prose in comparison. Our Mrs. Montagu would cry over it from beginning to end. It was pronounced by all the members of the Literary, Scientific and Philosophical Society the greatest poem of the age, and all anticipated the noise it would make in the great world. There was not a doubt but the London booksellers would be mad after it, and the only fear of my friends was, that I would make a sacrifice by selling it too cheap. Every time they talked the matter over they increased the price. They reckoned up the great sums given for the poems of certain popular writers, and determined that mine was worth more than all put together, and ought to be paid for accordingly. For my part, I was modest in my expectations, and determined that I would be satisfied with a thousand guineas. So I put my poem in my pocket and set off for London.

My journey was joyous. My heart was light as my purse, and my head full of anticipations of fame and fortune. With what swelling pride did I cast my eyes upon old London from the heights of Highgate. I was like a general looking down upon a place he expects to conquer. The great metropolis lay stretched before me, buried under a home-made cloud of murky smoke, that wrapped it from the brightness of a sunny day, and formed for it a kind of artificial bad weather. At the outskirts of the city, away to the west, the smoke gradually decreased until all was clear and sunny, and the view stretched uninterrupted to the blue line of the Kentish Hills.

My eye turned fondly to where the mighty cupola of St.

Paul's swelled dimly through this misty chaos, and I pictured to myself the solemn realm of learning that lies about its base. How soon should the "Pleasures of Melancholy" throw this world of booksellers and printers into a bustle of business and delight! How soon should I hear my name repeated by printers' devils throughout Pater Noster Row, and Angel Court, and Ave Maria Lane, until Amen corner should echo back the sound!

Arrived in town, I repaired at once to the most fashionable publisher. Every new author patronizes him of course. In fact, it had been determined in the village circle that he should be the fortunate man. I cannot tell you how vain-gloriously I walked the streets; my head was in the clouds. I felt the airs of heaven playing about it, and fancied it already encircled by a halo of literary glory. As I passed by the windows of bookshops, I anticipated the time when my work would be shining among the hot-pressed wonders of the day; and my face, scratched on copper, or cut in wood, figuring in fellowship with those of Scott and Byron and Moore.

When I applied at the publisher's house there was something in the loftiness of my air, and the dinginess of my dress, that struck the clerks with reverence. They doubtless took me for some person of consequence, probably a digger of Greek roots, or a penetrator of pyramids. A proud man in a dirty shirt is always an imposing character in the world of letters; one must feel intellectually secure before he can venture to dress shabbily; none but a great scholar or a great genius dares to be dirty; so I was ushered at once to the sanctum sanctorum of this high-priest of Minerva.

The publishing of books is a very different affair nowadays from what it was in the time of Bernard Lintot. I found the publisher a fashionably-dressed man, in an elegant drawing-room, furnished with sofas and portraits of celebrated authors, and cases of splendidly bound books. He was writing letters at an elegant table. This was transacting business in style. The place seemed suited to the magnifi-

cent publications that issued from it. I rejoiced at the choice I had made of a publisher, for I always liked to encourage men of taste and spirit.

I stepped up to the table with the lofty poetical port that I had been accustomed to maintain in our village circle; though I threw in it something of a patronizing air, such as one feels when about to make a man's fortune. The publisher paused with his pen in his hand, and seemed waiting in mute suspense to know what was to be announced by so singular an apparition.

I put him at his ease in a moment, for I felt that I had but to come, see, and conquer. I made known my name, and the name of my poem; produced my precious roll of blotted manuscript, laid it on the table with an emphasis, and told him at once, to save time and come directly to the point, the price was one thousand guineas.

I had given him no time to speak, nor did he seem so inclined. He continued looking at me for a moment with an air of whimsical perplexity; scanned me from head to foot; looked down at the manuscript, then up again at me, then pointed to a chair; and whistling softly to himself, went on writing his letter.

I sat for some time waiting his reply, supposing he was making up his mind; but he only paused occasionally to take a fresh dip of ink, to stroke his chin or the tip of his nose, and then resumed his writing. It was evident his mind was intently occupied upon some other subject; but I had no idea that any other subject should be attended to and my poem lie unnoticed on the table. I had supposed that everything would make way for the "Pleasures of Melancholy."

My gorge at length rose within me. I took up my manuscript; thrust it into my pocket, and walked out of the room; making some noise as I went, to let my departure be heard. The publisher, however, was too much busied in minor concerns to notice it. I was suffered to walk downstairs without being called back. I sallied forth into the street, but no clerk was sent after me, nor did the publisher call after me



MR. DRIBBLE AND HIS FRIEND IN GREEN.

from the drawing-room window. I have been told since that he considered me either a madman or a fool. I leave you to judge how much he was in the wrong in his opinion.

When I turned the corner my crest fell. I cooled down in my pride and my expectations, and reduced my terms with the next bookseller to whom I applied. I had no better success; nor with a third; nor with a fourth. I then desired the booksellers to make an offer themselves; but the deuce an offer would they make. They told me poetry was a mere drug; everybody wrote poetry; the market was overstocked with it. And then, they said, the title of my poem was not taking: that pleasures of all kinds were worn threadbare; nothing but horrors did nowadays, and even these were almost worn out. Tales of pirates, robbers, and bloody Turks might answer tolerably well; but then they must come from some established well-known name, or the public would not look at them.

At last I offered to leave my poem with a bookseller to read it and judge for himself. "Why, really, my dear Mr. —a—a—I forget your name," said he, cutting an eye at my rusty coat and shabby gaiters, "really, sir, we are so pressed with business just now, and have so many manuscripts on hand to read, that we have not time to look at any new production, but if you can call again in a week or two, or say the middle of next month, we may be able to look over your writings and give you an answer. Don't forget, the month after next—good morning, sir—happy to see you any time you are passing this way"—so saying, he bowed me out in the civilest way imaginable. In short, sir, instead of an eager competition to secure my poem I could not even get it read! In the meantime I was harassed by letters from my friends, wanting to know when the work was to appear; who was to be my publisher; but above all things warning me not to let it go too cheap.

There was but one alternative left. I determined to publish the poem myself; and to have my triumph over the booksellers, when it should become the fashion of the day. I

accordingly published the "Pleasures of Melancholy" and ruined myself. Excepting the copies sent to the reviews, and to my friends in the country, not one, I believe, ever left the bookseller's warehouse. The printer's bill drained my purse, and the only notice that was taken of my work was contained in the advertisements paid for by myself.

I could have borne all this, and have attributed it as usual to the mismanagement of the publisher, or the want of taste in the public; and could have made the usual appeal to posterity; but my village friends would not let me rest in quiet. They were picturing me to themselves feasting with the great, communing with the literary, and in the high course of fortune and renown. Every little while, some one came to me with a letter of introduction from the village circle, recommending him to my attentions, and requesting that I would make him known in society; with a hint that an introduction to the house of a celebrated literary nobleman would be extremely agreeable.

I determined, therefore, to change my lodgings, drop my correspondence, and disappear altogether from the view of my village admirers. Besides, I was anxious to make one more poetic attempt. I was by no means disheartened by the failure of my first. My poem was evidently too didactic. The public was wise enough. It no longer read for instruction. "They want horrors, do they?" said I, "I'faith then they shall have enough of them." So I looked out for some quiet retired place, where I might be out of reach of my friends, and have leisure to cook up some delectable dish of poetical "hell-broth."

I had some difficulty in finding a place to my mind, when chance threw me in the way of Canonbury Castle. It is an ancient brick tower, hard by "merry Islington"; the remains of a hunting-seat of Queen Elizabeth, where she took the pleasures of the country, when the neighborhood was all woodland. What gave it particular interest in my eyes was the circumstance that it had been the residence of a poet. It was here Goldsmith resided when he wrote his "Deserted

Village." I was shown the very apartment. It was a relic of the original style of the castle, with paneled wainscots and Gothic windows. I was pleased with its air of antiquity, and with its having been the residence of poor Goldy. "Goldsmith was a pretty poet," said I to myself, "a very pretty poet; though rather of the old school. He did not think and feel so strongly as is the fashion nowadays; but had he lived in these times of hot hearts and hot heads he would have written quite differently."

In a few days I was quietly established in my new quarters; my books all arranged, my writing desk placed by a window looking out into the fields; and I felt as snug as Robinson Crusoe, when he had finished his bower. For several days I enjoyed all the novelty of change and the charms which grace a new lodgings before one has found out their defects. I rambled about the fields where I fancied Goldsmith had rambled. I explored merry Islington; ate my solitary dinner at the Black Bull, which according to tradition was a country seat of Sir Walter Raleigh, and would sit and sip my wine and muse on old times, in a quaint old room, where many a council had been held.

All this did very well for a few days: I was stimulated by novelty; inspired by the associations awakened in my mind by these curious haunts, and began to think I felt the spirit of composition stirring within me; but Sunday came, and with it the whole city world, swarming about Canonbury Castle. I could not open my window but I was stunned with shouts and noises from the cricket ground. The late quiet road beneath my window was alive with the tread of feet and clack of tongues; and to complete my misery, I found that my quiet retreat was absolutely a "show house!" the tower and its contents being shown to strangers at sixpence a head.

There was a perpetual tramping upstairs of citizens and their families, to look about the country from the top of the tower, and to take a peep at the city through the telescope, to try if they could discern their own chimneys. And then,

in the midst of a vein of thought, or a moment of inspiration, I was interrupted, and all my ideas put to flight, by my intolerable landlady's tapping at the door, and asking me if I would "jist please to let a lady and gentleman come in to take a look at Mr. Goldsmith's room."

If you know anything of what an author's study is, and what an author is himself, you must know that there was no standing this. I put a positive interdict on my room's being exhibited; but then it was shown when I was absent, and my papers put in confusion; and on returning home one day, I absolutely found a cursed tradesman and his daughters gaping over my manuscripts; and my landlady in a panic at my appearance. I tried to make out a little longer by taking the key in my pocket, but it would not do. I overheard mine hostess one day telling some of her customers on the stairs that the room was occupied by an author, who was always in a tantrum if interrupted; and I immediately perceived, by a slight noise at the door, that they were peeping at me through the keyhole. By the head of Apollo, but this was quite too much! with all my eagerness for fame, and my ambition of the stare of the million, I had no idea of being exhibited by retail, at sixpence a head, and that through a keyhole. So I bade adieu to Canonbury Castle, merry Islington, and the haunts of poor Goldsmith, without having advanced a single line in my labors.

My next quarters were at a small whitewashed cottage, which stands not far from Hempstead, just on the brow of a hill, looking over Chalk Farm, and Cambden Town, remarkable for the rival houses of Mother Red Cap and Mother Black Cap; and so across Crackskull Common to the distant city.

The cottage is in nowise remarkable in itself; but I regarded it with reverence, for it had been the asylum of a persecuted author. Hither poor Steele had retreated and lain perdue when persecuted by creditors and bailiffs; those immemorial plagues of authors and free-spirited gentlemen; and here he had written many numbers of the "Spectator."

It was from hence, too, that he had dispatched those little notes to his lady, so full of affection and whimsicality; in which the fond husband, the careless gentleman, and the shifting spendthrift, were so oddly blended. I thought, as I first eyed the window of his apartment, that I could sit within it and write volumes.

No such thing! It was haymaking season, and, as ill luck would have it, immediately opposite the cottage was a little alehouse with the sign of the load of hay. Whether it was there in Steele's time or not I cannot say; but it set all attempt at conception or inspiration at defiance. It was the resort of all the Irish haymakers who mow the broad fields in the neighborhood; and of drovers and teamsters who travel that road. Here would they gather in the endless summer twilight, or by the light of the harvest moon, and sit round a table at the door; and tittle, and laugh, and quarrel, and fight, and sing drowsy songs, and dawdle away the hours until the deep solemn notes of St. Paul's clock would warn the varlets home.

In the daytime I was still less able to write. It was broad summer. The haymakers were at work in the fields, and the perfume of the new-mown hay brought with it the recollection of my native fields. So instead of remaining in my room to write, I went wandering about Primrose Hill and Hempstead Heights and Shepherd's Field, and all those Arcadian scenes so celebrated by London bards. I cannot tell you how many delicious hours I have passed lying on the cocks of new-mown hay, on the pleasant slopes of some of those hills, inhaling the fragrance of the fields, while the summer fly buzzed about me, or the grasshopper leaped into my bosom; and how I have gazed with half-shut eye upon the smoky mass of London, and listened to the distant sound of its population, and pitied the poor sons of earth, toiling in its bowels, like gnomes in "the dark gold mine."

People may say what they please about Cockney pastorals; but, after all, there is a vast deal of rural beauty about the western vicinity of London; and any one that has

looked down upon the valley of West End, with its soft bosom of green pasturage, lying open to the south, and dotted with cattle; the steeple of Hempstead rising among rich groves on the brow of the hill, and the learned height of Harrow in the distance; will confess that never has he seen a more absolutely rural landscape in the vicinity of a great metropolis.

Still, however, I found myself not a whit the better off for my frequent change of lodgings; and I began to discover that in literature, as in trade, the old proverb holds good, "a rolling stone gathers no moss."

The tranquil beauty of the country played the very vengeance with me. I could not mount my fancy into the termagant vein. I could not conceive, amid the smiling landscape, a scene of blood and murder; and the smug citizens in breeches and gaiters put all ideas of heroes and bandits out of my brain. I could think of nothing but dulcet subjects. "The pleasures of spring"—"the pleasures of solitude"—"the pleasures of tranquillity"—"the pleasures of sentiment"—nothing but pleasures; and I had the painful experience of "the pleasures of melancholy" too strongly in my recollection to be beguiled by them.

Chance at length befriended me. I had frequently in my ramblings loitered about Hempstead Hill; which is a kind of Parnassus of the metropolis. At such times I occasionally took my dinner at Jack Straw's Castle. It is a country inn so named. The very spot where that notorious rebel and his followers held their council of war. It is a favorite resort of citizens when rurally inclined, as it commands fine fresh air and a good view of the city.

I sat one day in the public room of this inn, ruminating over a beefsteak and a pint of port, when my imagination kindled up with ancient and heroic images. I had long wanted a theme and a hero; both suddenly broke upon my mind; I determined to write a poem on the history of Jack Straw. I was so full of my subject that I was fearful of being anticipated. I wondered that none of the poets of the day, in their researches after ruffian heroes, had ever thought

of Jack Straw. I went to work pell-mell, blotted several sheets of paper with choice floating thoughts, and battles, and descriptions, to be ready at a moment's warning. In a few days' time I sketched out the skeleton of my poem, and nothing was wanting but to give it flesh and blood. I used to take my manuscript and stroll about Caen Wood, and read aloud; and would dine at the castle, by way of keeping up the vein of thought.

I was taking a meal there, one day, at a rather late hour, in the public room. There was no other company but one man, who sat enjoying his pint of port at a window, and noticing the passers-by. He was dressed in a green shooting coat. His countenance was strongly marked. He had a hooked nose, a romantic eye, excepting that it had something of a squint; and altogether, as I thought, a poetical style of head. I was quite taken with the man, for you must know I am a little of a physiognomist: I set him down at once for either a poet or a philosopher.

As I like to make new acquaintances, considering every man a volume of human nature, I soon fell into conversation with the stranger, who, I was pleased to find, was by no means difficult of access. After I had dined, I joined him at the window, and we became so sociable that I proposed a bottle of wine together; to which he most cheerfully assented.

I was too full of my poem to keep long quiet on the subject, and began to talk about the origin of the tavern, and the history of Jack Straw. I found my new acquaintance to be perfectly at home on the topic, and to jump exactly with my humor in every respect. I became elevated by the wine and the conversation. In the fullness of an author's feelings, I told him of my projected poem, and repeated some passages; and he was in raptures. He was evidently of a strong poetical turn.

"Sir," said he, filling my glass at the same time, "our poets don't look at home. I don't see why we need go out of old England for robbers and rebels to write about. I like

your Jack Straw, sir. He's a home-made hero. I like him, sir. I like him exceedingly. He's English to the backbone, damme. Give me honest old England, after all; them's my sentiments, sir!"

"I honor your sentiments," cried I zealously. "They are exactly my own. An English ruffian for poetry is as good a ruffian for poetry as any in Italy or Germany, or the Archipelago; but it is hard to make our poets think so."

"More shame for them!" replied the man in green. "What a plague would they have? What have we to do with their Archipelagos of Italy and Germany? Haven't we heaths and commons and highways on our own little island? Ay, and stout fellows to pad the hoof over them too? Come, sir, my service to you—I agree with you perfectly."

"Poets in old times had right notions on this subject," continued I; "witness the fine old ballads about Robin Hood, Allen A'Dale, and other stanch blades of yore."

"Right, sir, right," interrupted he. "Robin Hood! He was the lad to cry stand! to a man, and never flinch."

"Ah, sir," said I, "they had famous bands of robbers in the good old times. Those were glorious poetical days. The merry crew of Sherwood Forest, who led such a roving picturesque life, 'under the greenwood tree.' I have often wished to visit their haunts, and tread the scenes of the exploits of Friar Tuck, the Clym of the Clough, and Sir William of Cloudeslie."

"Nay, sir," said the gentleman in green, "we have had several very pretty gangs since their day. Those gallant dogs that kept about the great heaths in the neighborhood of London; about Bagshot, and Hounslow, and Black Heath, for instance—come, sir, my service to you. You don't drink."

"I suppose," said I, emptying my glass—"I suppose you have heard of the famous Turpin, who was born in this very village of Hempstead, and who used to lurk with his gang in Epping Forest, about a hundred years since?"

"Have I?" cried he—"to be sure I have! A hearty old

blade that; sound as pitch. Old Turpentine!—as we used to call him. A famous fine fellow, sir.”

“Well, sir,” continued I, “I have visited Waltham Abbey, and Chinkford Church, merely from the stories I heard when a boy of his exploits there, and I have searched Epping Forest for the cavern where he used to conceal himself. You must know,” added I, “that I am a sort of amateur of highwaymen. They were dashing, daring fellows; the last apologies that we had for the knight-errants of yore. Ah, sir! the country has been sinking gradually into tameness and commonplace. We are losing the old English spirit. The bold knights of the past have all dwindled down into lurking footpads and sneaking pickpockets. There’s no such thing as a dashing gentleman-like robbery committed nowadays on the king’s highway. A man may roll from one end of England to the other in a drowsy coach or jingling post-chaise without any other adventure than that of being occasionally overturned, sleeping in damp sheets, or having an ill-cooked dinner.

“We hear no more of public coaches being stopped and robbed by a well-mounted gang of resolute fellows with pistols in their hands and crapes over their faces. What a pretty poetical incident was it, for example, in domestic life, for a family carriage, on its way to a country seat, to be attacked about dusk; the old gentleman eased of his purse and watch, the ladies of their necklaces and ear-rings, by a politely-spoken highwayman on a blood mare, who afterward leaped the hedge and galloped across the country, to the admiration of Miss Carolina the daughter, who would write a long and romantic account of the adventure to her friend Miss Juliana in town. Ah, sir! we meet with nothing of such incidents nowadays.”

“That, sir”—said my companion, taking advantage of a pause, when I stopped to recover breath and to take a glass of wine, which he had just poured out—“that, sir, craving your pardon, is not owing to any want of old English pluck. It is the effect of this cursed system of banking. People do

not travel with bags of gold as they did formerly. They have post notes and drafts on bankers. To rob a coach is like catching a crow; where you have nothing but carrion flesh and feathers for your pains. But a coach in old times, sir, was as rich as a Spanish galleon. It turned out the yellow boys bravely; and a private carriage was a cool hundred or two at least."

I cannot express how much I was delighted with the sallies of my new acquaintance. He told me that he often frequented the castle, and would be glad to know more of me; and I promised myself many a pleasant afternoon with him, when I should read him my poem, as it proceeded, and benefit by his remarks; for it was evident he had the true poetical feeling.

"Come, sir!" said he, pushing the bottle; "damme, I like you!—You're a man after my own heart. I'm cursed slow in making new acquaintances in general. One must stand on the reserve, you know. But when I meet with a man of your kidney, damme, my heart jumps at once to him. Them's my sentiments, sir. Come, sir, here's Jack Straw's health! I presume one can drink it nowadays without treason!"

"With all my heart," said I gayly, "and Dick Turpin's into the bargain!"

"Ah, sir," said the man in green, "those are the kind of men for poetry. The Newgate calendar, sir! The Newgate calendar is your only reading! There's the place to look for bold deeds and dashing fellows."

We were so much pleased with each other that we sat until a late hour. I insisted on paying the bill, for both my purse and my heart were full; and I agreed that he should pay the score at our next meeting. As the coaches had all gone that run between Hempstead and London, he had to return on foot. He was so delighted with the idea of my poem that he could talk of nothing else. He made me repeat such passages as I could remember, and though I did it in a very mangled manner, having a wretched memory, yet he was in raptures.

Every now and then he would break out with some scrap which he would misquote most terribly, but would rub his hands and exclaim, "By Jupiter, that's fine! that's noble! Damme, sir, if I can conceive how you hit upon such ideas!"

I must confess I did not always relish his misquotations, which sometimes made absolute nonsense of the passages; but what author stands upon trifles when he is praised? Never had I spent a more delightful evening. I did not perceive how the time flew. I could not bear to separate, but continued walking on, arm-in-arm with him, past my lodgings, through Cambden Town, and across Crackskull Common, talking the whole way about my poem.

When we were half-way across the common he interrupted me in the midst of a quotation by telling me that this had been a famous place for footpads, and was still occasionally infested by them; and that a man had recently been shot there in attempting to defend himself.

"The more fool he!" cried I. "A man is an idiot to risk life, or even limb, to save a paltry purse of money. It's quite a different case from that of a duel, where one's honor is concerned. For my part," added I, "I should never think of making resistance against one of those desperadoes."

"Say you so?" cried my friend in green, turning suddenly upon me, and putting a pistol to my breast, "why, then have at you, my lad!—come, disburse! empty! unsack!"

In a word, I found that the muse had played me another of her tricks, and had betrayed me into the hands of a footpad. There was no time to parley; he made me turn my pockets inside out; and hearing the sound of distant footsteps, he made one fell swoop upon purse, watch, and all, gave me a thwack over my unlucky pate that laid me sprawling on the ground, and scampered away with his booty.

I saw no more of my friend in green until a year or two afterward; when I caught a sight of his poetical countenance among a crew of scapegraces, heavily ironed, who were on the way for transportation. He recognized me at once, tipped

me an impudent wink, and asked me how I came on with the history of Jack Straw's castle.

The catastrophe at Crackskull Common put an end to my summer's campaign. I was cured of my poetical enthusiasm for rebels, robbers, and highwaymen. I was put out of conceit of my subject, and, what was worse, I was lightened of my purse, in which was almost every farthing I had in the world. So I abandoned Sir Richard Steele's cottage in despair, and crept into less celebrated, though no less poetical and airy lodgings in a garret in town.

I see you are growing weary, so I will not detain you with any more of my luckless attempts to get astride of Pegasus. Still I could not consent to give up the trial and abandon those dreams of renown in which I had indulged. How should I ever be able to look the literary circle of my native village in the face if I were so completely to falsify their predictions. For some time longer, therefore, I continued to write for fame, and of course was the most miserable dog in existence, besides being in continual risk of starvation.

I have many a time strolled sorrowfully along, with a sad heart and an empty stomach, about five o'clock, and looked wistfully down the areas in the west end of the town; and seen through the kitchen windows the fires gleaming, and the joints of meat turning on the spits and dripping with gravy; and the cook maids beating up puddings, or trussing turkeys, and have felt for the moment that if I could but have the run of one of those kitchens, Apollo and the muses might have the hungry heights of Parnassus for me. Oh, sir! talk of meditations among the tombs—they are nothing so melancholy as the meditations of a poor devil without penny in pouch, along a line of kitchen windows toward dinner-time.

At length, when almost reduced to famine and despair, the idea all at once entered my head that perhaps I was not so clever a fellow as the village and myself had supposed. It was the salvation of me. The moment the idea popped

into my brain it brought conviction and comfort with it. I awoke as from a dream. I gave up immortal fame to those who could live on air; took to writing for mere bread, and have ever since led a very tolerable life of it. There is no man of letters so much at his ease, sir, as he that has no character to gain or lose. I had to train myself to it a little, however, and to clip my wings short at first, or they would have carried me up into poetry in spite of myself. So I determined to begin by the opposite extreme, and abandoning the higher regions of the craft, I came plump down to the lowest, and turned creeper.

“Creeper,” interrupted I, “and pray what is that?” Oh, sir! I see you are ignorant of the language of the craft; a creeper is one who furnishes the newspapers with paragraphs at so much a line; one that goes about in quest of misfortunes; attends the Bow Street office, the courts of justice, and every other den of mischief and iniquity. We are paid at the rate of a penny a line, and as we can sell the same paragraph to almost every paper, we sometimes pick up a very decent day’s work. Now and then the muse is unkind, or the day uncommonly quiet, and then we rather starve; and sometimes the unconscionable editors will clip our paragraphs when they are a little too rhetorical, and snip off twopence or threepence at a go. I have many a time had my pot of porter snipped off of my dinner in this way; and have had to dine with dry lips. However, I cannot complain. I rose gradually in the lower ranks of the craft, and am now, I think, in the most comfortable region of literature.

“And pray,” said I, “what may you be at present?”

“At present,” said he, “I am a regular job writer, and turn my hand to anything. I work up the writings of others at so much a sheet; turn off translations; write second-rate articles to fill up reviews and magazines; compile travels and voyages, and furnish theatrical criticisms for the newspapers. All this authorship, you perceive, is anonymous; it gives no reputation, except among the trade, where I am considered an author of all work, and am always sure of employ. That’s

the only reputation I want. I sleep soundly, without dread of duns or critics, and leave immortal fame to those that choose to fret and fight about it. Take my word for it, the only happy author in this world is he who is below the care of reputation.”

The preceding anecdotes of Buckthorne's early schoolmate, and a variety of peculiarities which I had remarked in himself, gave me a strong curiosity to know something of his own history. There was a dash of careless good humor about him that pleased me exceedingly, and at times a whimsical tinge of melancholy ran through his humor that gave it an additional relish. He had evidently been a little chilled and buffeted by fortune, without being soured thereby, as some fruits become mellow and sweeter from having been bruised or frostbitten. He smiled when I expressed my desire. “I have no great story,” said he, “to relate. A mere tissue of errors and follies. But, such as it is, you shall have one epoch of it, by which you may judge of the rest.” And so, without any further prelude, he gave me the following anecdotes of his early adventures.

BUCKTHORNE, OR THE YOUNG MAN OF GREAT EXPECTATIONS

I WAS born to very little property, but to great expectations; which is perhaps one of the most unlucky fortunes that a man can be born to. My father was a country gentleman, the last of a very ancient and honorable but decayed family, and resided in an old hunting lodge in Warwickshire. He was a keen sportsman and lived to the extent of his moderate income, so that I had little to expect from that quarter; but then I had a rich uncle by the mother's side, a penurious, accumulating curmudgeon, who it was confidently expected would make me his heir; because he was an old bachelor; be-

cause I was named after him, and because he hated all the world except myself.

He was, in fact, an inveterate hater, a miser even in misanthropy, and hoarded up a grudge as he did a guinea. Thus, though my mother was an only sister, he had never forgiven her marriage with my father, against whom he had a cold, still, immovable pique, which had lain at the bottom of his heart, like a stone in a well, ever since they had been school-boys together. My mother, however, considered me as the intermediate being that was to bring everything again into harmony, for she looked upon me as a prodigy—God bless her! My heart overflows whenever I recall her tenderness: she was the most excellent, the most indulgent of mothers. I was her only child; it was a pity she had no more, for she had fondness of heart enough to have spoiled a dozen!

I was sent, at an early age, to a public school, sorely against my mother's wishes, but my father insisted that it was the only way to make boys hardy. The school was kept by a conscientious prig of the ancient system, who did his duty by the boys intrusted to his care; that is to say, we were flogged soundly when we did not get our lessons. We were put into classes and thus flogged on in droves along the highways of knowledge, in much the same manner as cattle are driven to market, where those that are heavy in gait or short in leg have to suffer for the superior alertness or longer limbs of their companions.

For my part, I confess it with shame, I was an incorrigible laggard. I have always had the poetical feeling, that is to say, I have always been an idle fellow and prone to play the vagabond. I used to get away from my books and school whenever I could, and ramble about the fields. I was surrounded by seductions for such a temperament. The school-house was an old-fashioned whitewashed mansion of wood and plaster, standing on the skirts of a beautiful village. Close by it was the venerable church with a tall Gothic spire. Before it spread a lovely green valley, with a little stream glistening along through willow groves; while a line of blue

hills that bounded the landscape gave rise to many a summer day dream as to the fairyland that lay beyond. In spite of all the scourgings I suffered at that school to make me love my book, I cannot but look back upon the place with fondness. Indeed, I considered this frequent flagellation as the common lot of humanity, and the regular mode in which scholars were made. My kind mother used to lament over my details of the sore trials I underwent in the cause of learning; but my father turned a deaf ear to her expostulations. He had been flogged through school himself, and swore there was no other way of making a man of parts; though, let me speak it with all due reverence, my father was but an indifferent illustration of his own theory, for he was considered a grievous blockhead.

My poetical temperament evinced itself at a very early period. The village church was attended every Sunday by a neighboring squire—the lord of the manor, whose park stretched quite to the village, and whose spacious country seat seemed to take the church under its protection. Indeed, you would have thought the church had been consecrated to him instead of to the Deity. The parish clerk bowed low before him, and the vergers humbled themselves into the dust in his presence. He always entered a little late and with some stir, striking his cane emphatically on the ground; swaying his hat in his hand, and looking loftily to the right and left, as he walked slowly up the aisle, and the parson, who always ate his Sunday dinner with him, never commenced service until he appeared. He sat with his family in a large pew gorgeously lined, humbling himself devoutly on velvet cushions, and reading lessons of meekness and lowliness of spirit out of splendid gold and morocco prayer-books. Whenever the parson spoke of the difficulty of a rich man's entering the kingdom of heaven, the eyes of the congregation would turn toward the "grand pew," and I thought the squire seemed pleased with the application.

The pomp of this pew and the aristocratical air of the family struck my imagination wonderfully, and I fell des-

perately in love with a little daughter of the squire's about twelve years of age. This freak of fancy made me more truant from my studies than ever. I used to stroll about the squire's park, and would lurk near the house, to catch glimpses of this little damsel at the windows, or playing about the lawns, or walking out with her governess.

I had not enterprise or impudence enough to venture from my concealment; indeed, I felt like an arrant poacher, until I read one or two of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, when I pictured myself as some sylvan deity, and she a coy wood nymph of whom I was in pursuit. There is something extremely delicious in these early awakenings of the tender passion. I can feel, even at this moment, the thrilling of my boyish bosom, whenever by chance I caught a glimpse of her white frock fluttering among the shrubbery. I now began to read poetry. I carried about in my bosom a volume of Waller, which I had purloined from my mother's library; and I applied to my little fair one all the compliments lavished upon Sacharissa.

At length I danced with her at a school-ball. I was so awkward a booby that I dared scarcely speak to her; I was filled with awe and embarrassment in her presence; but I was so inspired that my poetical temperament for the first time broke out in verse; and I fabricated some glowing lines, in which I berhymed the little lady under the favorite name of Sacharissa. I slipped the verses, trembling and blushing, into her hand the next Sunday as she came out of church. The little prude handed them to her mamma; the mamma handed them to the squire; the squire, who had no soul for poetry, sent them in dudgeon to the schoolmaster; and the schoolmaster, with a barbarity worthy of the dark ages, gave me a sound and peculiarly humiliating flogging for thus trespassing upon Parnassus.

This was a sad outset for a votary of the muse. It ought to have cured me of my passion for poetry; but it only confirmed it, for I felt the spirit of a martyr rising within me. What was as well, perhaps, it cured me of my passion for the young lady; for I felt so indignant at the ignominious

horsing I had incurred in celebrating her charms that I could not hold up my head in church.

Fortunately for my wounded sensibility, the midsummer holydays came on, and I returned home. My mother, as usual, inquired into all my school concerns, my little pleasures, and cares, and sorrows; for boyhood has its share of the one as well as of the others. I told her all, and she was indignant at the treatment I had experienced. She fired up at the arrogance of the squire, and the prudery of the daughter; and as to the schoolmaster, she wondered where was the use of having schoolmasters, and why boys could not remain at home and be educated by tutors, under the eye of their mothers. She asked to see the verses I had written, and she was delighted with them; for to confess the truth, she had a pretty taste in poetry. She even showed them to the parson's wife, who protested they were charming, and the parson's three daughters insisted on each having a copy of them.

All this was exceedingly balsamic, and I was still more consoled and encouraged when the young ladies, who were the blue-stockings of the neighborhood, and had read Dr. Johnson's lives quite through, assured my mother that great geniuses never studied, but were always idle; upon which I began to surmise that I was myself something out of the common run. My father, however, was of a very different opinion, for when my mother, in the pride of her heart, showed him my copy of verses, he threw them out of the window, asking her "if she meant to maké a balladmonger of the boy." But he was a careless, common-thinking man, and I cannot say that I ever loved him much; my mother absorbed all my filial affection.

I used occasionally, during holydays, to be sent on short visits to the uncle who was to make me his heir; they thought it would keep me in his mind, and render him fond of me. He was a withered, anxious looking old fellow, and lived in a desolate old country seat, which he suffered to go to ruin from absolute niggardliness. He kept but one man-servant,

who had lived, or rather starved, with him for years. No woman was allowed to sleep in the house. A daughter of the old servant lived by the gate, in what had been a porter's lodge, and was permitted to come into the house about an hour each day, to make the beds, and cook a morsel of provisions.

The park that surrounded the house was all run wild; the trees grown out of shape; the fish-ponds stagnant; the urns and statues fallen from their pedestals and buried among the rank grass. The hares and pheasants were so little molested, except by poachers, that they bred in great abundance, and sported about the rough lawns and weedy avenues. To guard the premises and frighten off robbers, of whom he was somewhat apprehensive, and visitors, whom he held in almost equal awe, my uncle kept two or three bloodhounds, who were always prowling round the house, and were the dread of the neighboring peasantry. They were gaunt and half-starved, seemed ready to devour one from mere hunger, and were an effectual check on any stranger's approach to this wizard castle.

Such was my uncle's house, which I used to visit now and then during the holydays. I was, as I have before said, the old man's favorite; that is to say, he did not hate me so much as he did the rest of the world. I had been apprised of his character, and cautioned to cultivate his good-will; but I was too young and careless to be a courtier; and indeed have never been sufficiently studious of my interests to let them govern my feelings. However, we seemed to jog on very well together; and as my visits cost him almost nothing, they did not seem to be very unwelcome. I brought with me my gun and fishing-rod, and half supplied the table from the park and the fish-ponds.

Our meals were solitary and unsocial. My uncle rarely spoke; he pointed for whatever he wanted, and the servant perfectly understood him. Indeed, his man John, or Iron John, as he was called in the neighborhood, was a counter-part of his master. He was a tall, bony old fellow, with a

dry wig that seemed made of cow's tail, and a face as tough as though it had been made of bull's hide. He was generally clad in a long, patched livery coat, taken out of the wardrobe of the house; and which bagged loosely about him, having evidently belonged to some corpulent predecessor, in the more plenteous days of the mansion. From long habits of taciturnity, the hinges of his jaws seemed to have grown absolutely rusty, and it cost him as much effort to set them ajar, and to let out a tolerable sentence, as it would have done to set open the iron gates of the park and let out the family carriage that was dropping to pieces in the coach-house.

I cannot say, however, but that I was for some time amused with my uncle's peculiarities. Even the very desolateness of the establishment had something in it that hit my fancy. When the weather was fine I used to amuse myself, in a solitary way, by rambling about the park, and coursing like a colt across its lawns. The hares and pheasants seemed to stare with surprise, to see a human being walking these forbidden grounds by daylight. Sometimes I amused myself by jerking stones, or shooting at birds with a bow and arrows; for to have used a gun would have been treason. Now and then my path was crossed by a little red-headed, ragged-tailed urchin, the son of the woman at the lodge, who ran wild about the premises. I tried to draw him into familiarity, and to make a companion of him; but he seemed to have imbibed the strange, unsocial character of everything around him; and always kept aloof; so I considered him as another Orson, and amused myself with shooting at him with my bow and arrows, and he would hold up his breeches with one hand, and scamper away like a deer.

There was something in all this loneliness and wildness strangely pleasing to me. The great stables, empty and weather-broken, with the names of favorite horses over the vacant stalls; the windows bricked and boarded up; the broken roofs, garrisoned by rooks and jackdaws; all had a singularly forlorn appearance: one would have concluded the house to be totally uninhabited, were it not for a little thread

of blue smoke which now and then curled up like a corkscrew from the center of one of the wide chimneys when my uncle's starveling meal was cooking.

My uncle's room was in a remote corner of the building, strongly secured and generally locked. I was never admitted into this stronghold, where the old man would remain for the greater part of the time, drawn up like a veteran spider in the citadel of his web. The rest of the mansion, however, was open to me, and I sauntered about it unconstrained. The damp and rain which beat in through the broken windows crumbled the paper from the walls; mouldered the pictures, and gradually destroyed the furniture. I loved to rove about the wide, waste chambers in bad weather, and listen to the howling of the wind, and the banging about of the doors and window-shutters. I pleased myself with the idea how completely, when I came to the estate, I would renovate all things, and make the old building ring with merriment, till it was astonished at its own jocundity.

The chamber which I occupied on these visits was the same that had been my mother's when a girl. There was still the toilet-table of her own adorning; the landscapes of her own drawing. She had never seen it since her marriage, but would often ask me if everything was still the same. All was just the same; for I loved that chamber on her account, and had taken pains to put everything in order, and to mend all the flaws in the windows with my own hands. I anticipated the time when I should once more welcome her to the house of her fathers, and restore her to this little nestling-place of her childhood.

At length my evil genius, or, what perhaps is the same thing, the muse, inspired me with the notion of rhyming again. My uncle, who never went to church, used on Sundays to read chapters out of the Bible; and Iron John, the woman from the lodge, and myself, were his congregation. It seemed to be all one to him what he read, so long as it was something from the Bible: sometimes, therefore, it would be the Song of Solomon; and this withered anatomy would

read about being "stayed with flagons and comforted with apples, for he was sick of love." Sometimes he would hobble, with spectacle on nose, through whole chapters of hard Hebrew names in Deuteronomy; at which the poor woman would sigh and groan as if wonderfully moved. His favorite book, however, was "The Pilgrim's Progress"; and when he came to that part which treats of Doubting Castle and Giant Despair, I thought invariably of him and his desolate old country seat. So much did the idea amuse me that I took to scribbling about it under the trees in the park; and in a few days had made some progress in a poem, in which I had given a description of the place, under the name of Doubting Castle, and personified my uncle as Giant Despair.

I lost my poem somewhere about the house, and I soon suspected that my uncle had found it; as he harshly intimated to me that I could return home, and that I need not come and see him again until he should send for me.

Just about this time my mother died.—I cannot dwell upon the circumstance; my heart, careless and wayworn as it is, gushes with the recollection. Her death was an event that perhaps gave a turn to all my after fortunes. With her died all that made home attractive, for my father was harsh, as I have before said, and had never treated me with kindness. Not that he exerted any unusual severity toward me, but it was his way. I do not complain of him. In fact, I have never been much of a complaining disposition. I seem born to be buffeted by friends and fortune, and nature has made me a careless endurer of buffetings.

I now, however, began to grow very impatient of remaining at school, to be flogged for things that I did not like. I longed for variety, especially now that I had not my uncle's to resort to, by way of diversifying the dullness of school with the dreariness of his country seat. I was now turned of sixteen; tall for my age, and full of idle fancies. I had a roving, inextinguishable desire to see different kinds of life, and different orders of society; and this vagrant humor had

been fostered in me by Tom Dribble, the prime wag and great genius of the school, who had all the rambling propensities of a poet.

I used to sit at my desk in the school, on a fine summer's day, and instead of studying the book which lay open before me, my eye was gazing through the window on the green fields and blue hills. How I envied the happy groups seated on the tops of stage-coaches, chatting, and joking, and laughing, as they were whirled by the schoolhouse, on their way to the metropolis. Even the wagoners, trudging along beside their ponderous teams, and traversing the kingdom, from one end to the other, were objects of envy to me. I fancied to myself what adventures they must experience, and what odd scenes of life they must witness. All this was, doubtless, the poetical temperament working within me, and tempting me forth into a world of its own creation, which I mistook for the world of real life.

While my mother lived, this strong propensity to rove was counteracted by the stronger attractions of home, and by the powerful ties of affection which drew me to her side; but now that she was gone, the attractions had ceased, the ties were severed. I had no longer an anchorage ground for my heart; but was at the mercy of every vagrant impulse. Nothing but the narrow allowance on which my father kept me, and the consequent penury of my purse, prevented me from mounting the top of a stage-coach and launching myself adrift on the great ocean of life.

Just about this time the village was agitated for a day or two by the passing through of several caravans, containing wild beasts, and other spectacles for a great fair annually held at a neighboring town.

I had never seen a fair of any consequence, and my curiosity was powerfully awakened by this bustle of preparation. I gazed with respect and wonder at the vagrant personages who accompanied these caravans. I loitered about the village inn, listening with curiosity and delight to the slang talk and cant jokes of the showmen and their followers; and

I felt an eager desire to witness this fair, which my fancy decked out as something wonderfully fine.

A holyday afternoon presented, when I could be absent from the school from noon until evening. A wagon was going from the village to the fair. I could not resist the temptation, nor the eloquence of Tom Dribble, who was a truant to the very heart's core. We hired seats, and set off full of boyish expectation. I promised myself that I would but take a peep at the land of promise, and hasten back again before my absence should be noticed.

Heavens! how happy I was on arriving at the fair! How I was enchanted with the world of fun and pageantry around me! The humors of Punch; the feats of the equestrians; the magical tricks of the conjurers! But what principally caught my attention was—an itinerant theater; where a tragedy, pantomime, and farce were all acted in the course of half an hour, and more of the *dramatis personæ* murdered than at either Drury Lane or Covent Garden in a whole evening. I have since seen many a play performed by the best actors in the world, but never have I derived half the delight from any that I did from this first representation.

There was a ferocious tyrant in a skull cap like an inverted porringer, and a dress of red baize, magnificently embroidered with gilt leather; with his face so bewhiskered and his eyebrows so knit and expanded with burned cork that he made my heart quake within me as he stamped about the little stage. I was enraptured too with the surpassing beauty of a distressed damsel, in faded pink silk, and dirty white muslin, whom he held in cruel captivity by way of gaining her affections; and who wept and wrung her hands and flourished a ragged pocket-handkerchief from the top of an impregnable tower, of the size of a band-box.

Even after I had come out from the play, I could not tear myself from the vicinity of the theater; but lingered, gazing, and wondering, and laughing at the *dramatis personæ*, as they performed their antics, or danced upon a stage in front of the booth, to decoy a new set of spectators.

I was so bewildered by the scene, and so lost in the crowd of sensations that kept swarming upon me, that I was like one entranced. I lost my companion Tom Dribble, in a tumult and scuffle that took place near one of the shows, but I was too much occupied in mind to think long about him. I strolled about until dark, when the fair was lighted up, and a new scene of magic opened upon me. The illumination of the tents and booths; the brilliant effect of the stages decorated with lamps, with dramatic groups flaunting about them in gaudy dresses, contrasted splendidly with the surrounding darkness; while the uproar of drums, trumpets, fiddles, haut-boys, and cymbals, mingled with the harangues of the showmen, the squeaking of Punch, and the shouts and laughter of the crowd, all united to complete my giddy distraction.

Time flew without my perceiving it. When I came to myself and thought of the school, I hastened to return. I inquired for the wagon in which I had come: it had been gone for hours. I asked the time: it was almost midnight! A sudden quaking seized me. How was I to get back to school? I was too weary to make the journey on foot, and I knew not where to apply for a conveyance. Even if I should find one, could I venture to disturb the schoolhouse long after midnight? to arouse that sleeping lion, the usher, in the very midst of his night's rest? The idea was too dreadful for a delinquent schoolboy. All the horrors of return rushed upon me—my absence must long before this have been remarked—and absent for a whole night!—a deed of darkness not easily to be expiated. The rod of the pedagogue budded forth into tenfold terrors before my affrighted fancy. I pictured to myself punishment and humiliation in every variety of form; and my heart sickened at the picture. Alas! how often are the petty ills of boyhood as painful to our tender natures as are the sterner evils of manhood to our robuster minds.

I wandered about among the booths, and I might have derived a lesson from my actual feelings, how much the charms of this world depend upon ourselves; for I no longer

saw anything gay or delightful in the revelry around me. At length I lay down, wearied and perplexed, behind one of the large tents, and covering myself with the margin of the tent cloth, to keep off the night chill, I soon fell asleep.

I had not slept long, when I was awakened by the noise of merriment within an adjoining booth. It was the itinerant theater, rudely constructed of boards and canvas. I peeped through an aperture, and saw the whole dramatis personæ, tragedy, comedy, pantomime, all refreshing themselves after the final dismissal of their auditors. They were merry and gamesome, and made their flimsy theater ring with their laughter. I was astonished to see the tragedy tyrant in red baize and fierce whiskers, who had made my heart quake as he strutted about the boards, now transformed into a fat, good-humored fellow; the beaming 'porringer laid aside from his brow, and his jolly face washed from all the terrors of burned cork. I was delighted, too, to see the distressed damsel in faded silk and dirty muslin, who had trembled under his tyranny and afflicted me so much by her sorrows, now seated familiarly on his knee and quaffing from the same tankard. Harlequin lay asleep on one of the benches; and monks, satyrs and vestal virgins were grouped together, laughing outrageously at a broad story, told by an unhappy count who had been barbarously murdered in the tragedy.

This was, indeed, novelty to me. It was a peep into another planet. I gazed and listened with intense curiosity and enjoyment. They had a thousand odd stories and jokes about the events of the day, and burlesque descriptions and mimickings of the spectators who had been admiring them. Their conversation was full of allusions to their adventures at different places where they had exhibited; the characters they had met with in different villages; and the ludicrous difficulties in which they had occasionally been involved. All past cares and troubles were now turned by these thoughtless beings into matter of merriment; and made to contribute to the gayety of the moment. They had been moving from

fair to fair about the kingdom, and were the next morning to set out on their way to London.

My resolution was taken. I crept from my nest, and scrambled through a hedge into a neighboring field, where I went to work to make a tatterdemalion of myself. I tore my clothes; soiled them with dirt; begrimed my face and hands; and, crawling near one of the booths, purloined an old hat, and left my new one in its place. It was an honest theft, and I hope may not hereafter rise up in judgment against me.

I now ventured to the scene of merrymaking, and, presenting myself before the dramatic corps, offered myself as a volunteer. I felt terribly agitated and abashed, for "never before stood I in such a presence." I had addressed myself to the manager of the company. He was a fat man dressed in dirty white; with a red sash fringed with tinsel swathed round his body. His face was smeared with paint, and a majestic plume towered from an old spangled black bonnet. He was the Jupiter tonans of this Olympus, and was surrounded by the inferior gods and goddesses of his court. He sat on the end of a bench, by a table, with one arm akimbo and the other extended to the handle of a tankard, which he had slowly set down from his lips, as he surveyed me from head to foot. It was a moment of awful scrutiny, and I fancied the groups around all watching us in silent suspense, and waiting for the imperial nod.

He questioned me as to who I was; what were my qualifications; and what terms I expected. I passed myself off for a discharged servant from a gentleman's family; and as, happily, one does not require a special recommendation to get admitted into bad company, the questions on that head were easily satisfied. As to my accomplishments, I would spout a little poetry, and knew several scenes of plays, which I had learned at school exhibitions. I could dance ——, that was enough; no further questions were asked me as to accomplishments; it was the very thing they wanted; and, as I asked no wages, but merely meat and drink, and safe conduct about the world, a bargain was struck in a moment.

Behold me, therefore, transformed of a sudden, from a gentleman student to a dancing buffoon; for such, in fact, was the character in which I made my debut. I was one of those who formed the groups in the dramas, and were principally employed on the stage in front of the booth, to attract company. I was equipped as a satyr, in a dress of drab frieze that fitted to my shape; with a great laughing mask, ornamented with huge ears and short horns. I was pleased with the disguise, because it kept me from the danger of being discovered, while we were in that part of the country; and, as I had merely to dance and make antics, the character was favorable to a debutant, being almost on a par with Simon Snug's part of the Lion, which required nothing but roaring.

I cannot tell you how happy I was at this sudden change in my situation. I felt no degradation, for I had seen too little of society to be thoughtful about the differences of rank; and a boy of sixteen is seldom aristocratical. I had given up no friend; for there seemed to be no one in the world that cared for me, now my poor mother was dead. I had given up no pleasure, for my pleasure was to ramble about and indulge the flow of a poetical imagination, and I now enjoyed it in perfection. There is no life so truly poetical as that of a dancing buffoon.

It may be said that all this argued groveling inclinations. I do not think so; not that I mean to vindicate myself in any great degree; I know too well what a whimsical compound I am. But in this instance I was seduced by no love of low company, nor disposition to indulge in low vices. I have always despised the brutally vulgar; and I have always had a disgust at vice, whether in high or low life. I was governed merely by a sudden and thoughtless impulse. I had no idea of resorting to this profession as a mode of life; or of attaching myself to these people, as my future class of society. I thought merely of a temporary gratification of my curiosity, and an indulgence of my humors. I had already a strong relish for the peculiarities of character and the vari-

eties of situation, and I have always been fond of the comedy of life, and desirous of seeing it through all its shifting scenes.

In mingling, therefore, among mountebanks and buffoons I was protected by the very vivacity of imagination which had led me among them. I moved about enveloped, as it were, in a protecting delusion which my fancy spread around me. I assimilated to these people only as they struck me poetically; their whimsical ways and a certain picturesqueness in their mode of life entertained me; but I was neither amused nor corrupted by their vices. In short, I mingled among them, as Prince Hal did among his graceless associates, merely to gratify my humor.

I did not investigate my motives in this manner at the time, for I was too careless and thoughtless to reason about the matter; but I do so now, when I look back with trembling to think of the ordeal to which I unthinkingly exposed myself, and the manner in which I passed through it. Nothing, I am convinced, but the poetical temperament, that hurried me into the scrape, brought me out of it without my becoming an arrant vagabond.

Full of the enjoyment of the moment, giddy with the wildness of animal spirits, so rapturous in a boy, I capered, I danced, I played a thousand fantastic tricks about the stage, in the villages in which we exhibited; and I was universally pronounced the most agreeable monster that had ever been seen in those parts. My disappearance from school had awakened my father's anxiety; for I one day heard a description of myself cried before the very booth in which I was exhibiting; with the offer of a reward for any intelligence of me. I had no great scruple about letting my father suffer a little uneasiness on my account; it would punish him for past indifference, and would make him value me the more when he found me again. I have wondered that some of my comrades did not recognize in me the stray sheep that was cried; but they were all, no doubt occupied by their own concerns. They were all laboring seriously in their

antic vocations, for folly was a mere trade with most of them, and they often grinned and capered with heavy hearts. With me, on the contrary, it was all real. I acted *con amore*, and rattled and laughed from the irrepressible gayety of my spirits. It is true that, now and then, I started and looked grave on receiving a sudden thwack from the wooden sword of Harlequin, in the course of my gambols; as it brought to mind the birch of my schoolmaster. But I soon got accustomed to it; and bore all the cuffing, and kicking, and tumbling about that form the practical wit of your itinerant pantomime, with a good humor that made me a prodigious favorite.

The country campaign of the troupe was soon at an end and we set off for the metropolis, to perform at the fairs which are held in its vicinity. The greater part of our theatrical property was sent on direct, to be in a state of preparation for the opening of the fairs; while a detachment of the company traveled slowly on, foraging among the villages. I was amused with the desultory, haphazard kind of life we led; here to-day, and gone to-morrow. Sometimes reveling in ale-houses; sometimes feasting under hedges in the green fields. When audiences were crowded and business profitable, we fared well, and when otherwise, we fared scantily, and consoled ourselves with anticipations of the next day's success.

At length the increasing frequency of coaches hurrying past us, covered with passengers; the increasing number of carriages, carts, wagons, gigs, droves of cattle and flocks of sheep, all thronging the road; the snug country boxes with trim flower gardens twelve feet square, and their trees twelve feet high, all powdered with dust; and the innumerable seminaries for young ladies and gentlemen, situated along the road, for the benefit of country air and rural retirement: all these insignia announced that the mighty London was at hand. The hurry, and the crowd, and the bustle, and the noise, and the dust, increased as we proceeded, until I saw the great cloud of smoke hanging in the air, like a canopy of state, over this queen of cities.

In this way, then, did I enter the metropolis: a strolling vagabond; on the top of a caravan with a crew of vagabonds about me; but I was as happy as a prince, for, like Prince Hal, I felt myself superior to my situation, and knew that I could at any time cast it off and emerge into my proper sphere.

How my eyes sparkled as we passed Hyde Park corner, and I saw splendid equipages rolling by, with powdered footmen behind, in rich liveries, and fine nosegays, and gold-headed canes; and with lovely women within, so sumptuously dressed and so surpassingly fair. I was always extremely sensible to female beauty: and here I saw it in all its fascination; for, whatever may be said of "beauty unadorned," there is something almost awful in female loveliness decked out in jeweled state. The swan-like neck encircled with diamonds, the raven locks clustered with pearls, the ruby glowing on the snowy bosom, are objects that I could never contemplate without emotion; and a dazzling white arm clasped with bracelets, and taper transparent fingers laden with sparkling rings, are to me irresistible. My very eyes ached as I gazed at the high and courtly beauty that passed before me. It surpassed all that my imagination had conceived of the sex. I shrunk, for a moment, into shame at the company in which I was placed, and repined at the vast distance that seemed to intervene between me and these magnificent beings.

I forbear to give a detail of the happy life which I led about the skirts of the metropolis, playing at the various fairs held there during the latter part of spring and the beginning of summer. This continual change from place to place, and scene to scene, fed my imagination with novelties, and kept my spirits in a perpetual state of excitement.

As I was tall of my age I aspired at one time to play heroes in tragedy; but after two or three trials I was pronounced by the manager totally unfit for the line; and our first tragic actress, who was a large woman, and held a small hero in abhorrence, confirmed his decision.

The fact is, I had attempted to give point to language which had no point, and nature to scenes which had no nature. They said I did not fill out my characters; and they were right. The characters had all been prepared for a different sort of man. Our tragedy hero was a round, robustious fellow, with an amazing voice; who stamped and slapped his breast until his wig shook again; and who roared and bellowed out his bombast, until every phrase swelled upon the ear like the sound of a kettle-drum. I might as well have attempted to fill out his clothes as his characters. When we had a dialogue together, I was nothing before him, with my slender voice and discriminating manner. I might as well have attempted to parry a cudgel with a small sword. If he found me in any way gaining ground upon him, he would take refuge in his mighty voice, and throw his tones like peals of thunder at me, until they were drowned in the still louder thunders of applause from the audience.

To tell the truth, I suspect that I was not shown fair play, and that there was management at the bottom; for without vanity, I think I was a better actor than he. As I had not embarked in the vagabond line through ambition, I did not repine at lack of preferment; but I was grieved to find that a vagrant life was not without its cares and anxieties, and that jealousies, intrigues, and mad ambition were to be found even among vagabonds.

Indeed, as I became more familiar with my situation, and the delusions of fancy began to fade away, I discovered that my associates were not the happy careless creatures I had at first imagined them. They were jealous of each other's talents; they quarreled about parts, the same as the actors on the grand theaters; they quarreled about dresses; and there was one robe of yellow silk, trimmed with red, and a head-dress of three rumpled ostrich feathers, which were continually setting the ladies of the company by the ears. Even those who had attained the highest honors were not more happy than the rest; for Mr. Flimsey himself, our first tragedian, and apparently a jovial, good-humored fellow,

confessed to me one day, in the fullness of his heart, that he was a miserable man. He had a brother-in-law, a relative by marriage, though not by blood, who was manager of a theater in a small country town. And this same brother ("a little more than kin, but less than kind") looked down upon him, and treated him with contumely, because forsooth he was but a strolling player. I tried to console him with the thoughts of the vast applause he daily received, but it was all in vain. He declared that it gave him no delight, and that he should never be a happy man until the name of Flimsey rivaled the name of Crimp.

How little do those before the scenes know of what passes behind; how little can they judge, from the countenances of actors, of what is passing in their hearts. I have known two lovers quarrel like cats behind the scenes, who were, the moment after, to fly into each other's embraces. And I have dreaded, when our Belvidera was to take her farewell kiss of her Jaffier, lest she should bite a piece out of his cheek. Our tragedian was a rough joker off the stage; our prime clown the most peevish mortal living. The latter used to go about snapping and snarling, with a broad laugh painted on his countenance; and I can assure you that, whatever may be said of the gravity of a monkey, or the melancholy of a gibed cat, there is no more melancholy creature in existence than a mountebank off duty.

The only thing in which all parties agreed was to backbite the manager, and cabal against his regulations. This, however, I have since discovered to be a common trait of human nature, and to take place in all communities. It would seem to be the main business of man to repine at government. In all situations of life into which I have looked, I have found mankind divided into two grand parties: those who ride and those who are ridden. The great struggle of life seems to be which shall keep in the saddle. This, it appears to me, is the fundamental principle of politics, whether in great or little life. However, I do not mean to moralize; but one cannot always sink the philosopher.

Well, then, to return to myself. It was determined, as I said, that I was not fit for tragedy, and, unluckily, as my study was bad, having a very poor memory, I was pronounced unfit for comedy also: besides, the line of young gentleman was already engrossed by an actor with whom I could not pretend to enter into competition, he having filled it for almost half a century. I came down again therefore to pantomime. In consequence, however, of the good offices of the manager's lady, who had taken a liking to me, I was promoted from the part of the satyr to that of the lover; and with my face patched and painted, a huge cravat of paper, a steeple-crowned hat, and dangling, long-skirted, sky-blue coat, was metamorphosed into the lover of Columbine. My part did not call for much of the tender and sentimental. I had merely to pursue the fugitive fair one; to have a door now and then slammed in my face; to run my head occasionally against a post; to tumble and roll about with Pantaloon and the clown; and to endure the hearty thwacks of Harlequin's wooden sword.

As ill luck would have it, my poetical temperament began to ferment within me, and to work out new troubles. The inflammatory air of a great metropolis added to the rural scenes in which the fairs were held; such as Greenwich Park; Epping Forest; and the lovely valley of West End, had a powerful effect upon me. While in Greenwich Park I was witness to the old holyday games of running down hill; and kissing in the ring; and then the firmament of blooming faces and blue eyes that would be turned toward me as I was playing antics on the stage; all these set my young blood, and my poetical vein, in full flow. In short, I played my character to the life, and became desperately enamored of Columbine. She was a trim, well-made, tempting girl, with a roguish, dimpling face, and fine chestnut hair clustering all about it. The moment I got fairly smitten, there was an end to all playing. I was such a creature of fancy and feeling that I could not put on a pretended, when I was powerfully affected by a real emotion. I could

not sport with a fiction that came so near to the fact. I became too natural in my acting to succeed. And then, what a situation for a lover! I was a mere stripling, and she played with my passion; for girls soon grow more adroit and knowing in these matters than your awkward youngsters. What agonies had I to suffer. Every time that she danced in front of the booth and made such liberal displays of her charms, I was in torment. To complete my misery, I had a real rival in Harlequin; an active, vigorous, knowing varlet of six-and-twenty. What had a raw, inexperienced youngster like me to hope from such a competition?

I had still, however, some advantages in my favor. In spite of my change of life, I retained that indescribable something which always distinguishes the gentleman; that something which dwells in a man's air and deportment, and not in his clothes; and which it is as difficult for a gentleman to put off as for a vulgar fellow to put on. The company generally felt it, and used to call me little gentleman Jack. The girl felt it too; and in spite of her predilection for my powerful rival, she liked to flirt with me. This only aggravated my troubles, by increasing my passion and awakening the jealousy of her party-colored lover.

Alas! think what I suffered at being obliged to keep up an ineffectual chase after my Columbine through whole pantomimes; to see her carried off in the vigorous arms of the happy Harlequin; and to be obliged, instead of snatching her from him, to tumble sprawling with Pantaloon and the clown; and bear the infernal and degrading thwacks of my rival's weapon of lath; which, may Heaven confound him! (excuse my passion) the villain laid on with a malicious goodwill; nay, I could absolutely hear him chuckle and laugh beneath his accursed mask.—I beg pardon for growing a little warm in my narration. I wish to be cool, but these recollections will sometimes agitate me. I have heard and read of many desperate and deplorable situations of lovers; but none, I think, in which true love was ever exposed to so severe and peculiar a trial.

This could not last long. Flesh and blood, at least such flesh and blood as mine, could not bear it. I had repeated heart-burnings and quarrels with my rival, in which he treated me with the mortifying forbearance of a man toward a child. Had he quarreled outright with me, I could have stomached it; at least I should have known what part to take; but to be humored and treated as a child in the presence of my mistress, when I felt all the bantam spirit of a little man swelling within me—gods, it was insufferable!

At length we were exhibiting one day at West End fair, which was at that time a very fashionable resort, and often beleaguered by gay equipages from town. Among the spectators that filled the front row of our little canvas theater one afternoon, when I had to figure in a pantomime, was a party of young ladies from a boarding-school, with their governess. Guess my confusion when, in the midst of my antics, I beheld among the number my quondam flame; her whom I had berhymed at school; her for whose charms I had smarted so severely; the cruel Sacharissa! What was worse, I fancied she recollected me; and was repeating the story of my humiliating flagellation, for I saw her whispering her companions and her governess. I lost all consciousness of the part I was acting, and of the place where I was. I felt shrunk to nothing, and could have crept into a rat-hole—unluckily, none was open to receive me. Before I could recover from my confusion, I was tumbled over by Pantaloon and the clown; and I felt the sword of Harlequin making vigorous assaults, in a manner most degrading to my dignity.

Heaven and earth! was I again to suffer martyrdom in this ignominious manner, in the knowledge, and even before the very eyes of this most beautiful, but most disdainful of fair ones? All my long-smothered wrath broke out at once; the dormant feelings of the gentleman arose within me; stung to the quick by intolerable mortification, I sprang on my feet in an instant; leaped upon Harlequin like a young tiger; tore off his mask; buffeted him in the face, and soon

shed more blood on the stage than had been spilt upon it during a whole tragic campaign of battles and murders.

As soon as Harlequin recovered from his surprise he returned my assault with interest. I was nothing in his hands. I was game to be sure, for I was a gentleman; but he had the clownish advantages of bone and muscle. I felt as if I could have fought even unto the death; and I was likely to do so; for he was, according to the vulgar phrase, "putting my head into Chancery," when the gentle Columbine flew to my assistance. God bless the women; they are always on the side of the weak and the oppressed.

The battle now became general; the *dramatis personæ* ranged on either side. The manager interfered in vain. In vain were his spangled black bonnet and towering white feathers seen whisking about, and nodding, and bobbing, in the thickest of the fight. Warriors, ladies, priests, satyrs, kings, queens, gods and goddesses, all joined pell-mell in the fray. Never, since the conflict under the walls of Troy, had there been such a chance-medley warfare of combatants, human and divine. The audience applauded, the ladies shrieked and fled from the theater, and a scene of discord ensued that baffles all description.

Nothing but the interference of the peace officers restored some degree of order. The havoc, however, that had been made among dresses and decorations put an end to all further acting for that day. The battle over, the next thing was to inquire why it was begun; a common question among politicians, after a bloody and unprofitable war; and one not always easy to be answered. It was soon traced to me, and my unaccountable transport of passion, which they could only attribute to my having *run amuck*. The manager was judge and jury, and plaintiff into the bargain, and in such cases justice is always speedily administered. He came out of the fight as sublime a wreck as the Santissima Trinidad. His gallant plumes, which once towered aloft, were drooping about his ears. His robe of state hung in ribbons from his back and but ill concealed the ravages he had suffered in the

rear. He had received kicks and cuffs from all sides, during the tumult; for every one took the opportunity of slyly gratifying some lurking grudge on his fat carcass. He was a discreet man, and did not choose to declare war with all his company; so he swore all those kicks and cuffs had been given by me, and I let him enjoy the opinion. Some wounds he bore, however, which were the incontestable traces of a woman's warfare. His sleek rosy cheek was scored by trickling furrows, which were ascribed to the nails of my intrepid and devoted Columbine. The ire of the monarch was not to be appeased. He had suffered in his person, and he had suffered in his purse; his dignity too had been insulted, and that went for something; for dignity is always more irascible the more petty the potentate. He wreaked his wrath upon the beginners of the affray, and Columbine and myself were discharged, at once, from the company.

Figure me, then, to yourself, a stripling of little more than sixteen; a gentleman by birth; a vagabond by trade; turned adrift upon the world; making the best of my way through the crowd of West End fair; my mountebank dress fluttering in rags about me; the weeping Columbine hanging upon my arm, in splendid but tattered finery; the tears coursing one by one down her face; carrying off the red paint in torrents, and literally "preying upon her damask cheek."

The crowd made way for us as we passed and hooted in our rear. I felt the ridicule of my situation, but had too much gallantry to desert this fair one, who had sacrificed everything for me. Having wandered through the fair, we emerged, like another Adam and Eve, into unknown regions, and "had the world before us where to choose." Never was a more disconsolate pair seen in the soft valley of West End. The luckless Columbine cast back many a lingering look at the fair, which seemed to put on a more than usual splendor; its tents, and booths, and party-colored groups, all brightening in the sunshine, and gleaming among the trees; and its gay flags and streamers playing and fluttering in the light summer airs. With a heavy sigh she would lean on my arm

and proceed. I had no hope or consolation to give her; but she had linked herself to my fortunes, and she was too much of a woman to desert me.

Pensive and silent, then, we traversed the beautiful fields that lie behind Hempstead, and wandered on, until the fiddle, and the hautboy, and the shout, and the laugh, were swallowed up in the deep sound of the big bass drum, and even that died away into a distant rumble. We passed along the pleasant sequestered walk of Nightingale Lane. For a pair of lovers what scene could be more propitious?—But such a pair of lovers! Not a nightingale sang to soothe us: the very gypsies who were encamped there during the fair made no offer to tell the fortunes of such an ill-omened couple, whose fortunes, I suppose, they thought too legibly written to need an interpreter; and the gypsy children crawled into their cabins and peeped out fearfully at us as we went by. For a moment I paused, and was almost tempted to turn gypsy, but the poetical feeling for the present was fully satisfied, and I passed on. Thus we traveled, and traveled, like a prince and princess in nursery chronicle, until we had traversed a part of Hempstead Heath and arrived in the vicinity of Jack Straw's castle.

Here, wearied and dispirited, we seated ourselves on the margin of the hill, hard by the very milestone where Whittington of yore heard the Bow bells ring out the presage of his future greatness. Alas! no bell rung in invitation to us, as we looked disconsolately upon the distant city. Old London seemed to wrap itself up unsociably in its mantle of brown smoke, and to offer no encouragement to such a couple of tatterdemalions.

For once, at least, the usual course of the pantomime was reversed. Harlequin was jilted, and the lover had carried off Columbine in good earnest. But what was I to do with her? I had never contemplated such a dilemma; and I now felt that even a fortunate lover may be embarrassed by his good fortune. I really knew not what was to become of me; for I had still the boyish fear of returning home; standing in

awe of the stern temper of my father, and dreading the ready arm of the pedagogue. And even if I were to venture home, what was I to do with Columbine? I could not take her in my hand, and throw myself on my knees, and crave his forgiveness and his blessing according to dramatic usage. The very dogs would have chased such a draggle-tailed beauty from the grounds.

In the midst of my doleful dumps, some one tapped me on the shoulder, and looking up I saw a couple of rough sturdy fellows standing behind me. Not knowing what to expect I jumped on my legs, and was preparing again to make battle; but I was tripped up and secured in a twinkling.

"Come, come, young master," said one of the fellows in a gruff but good humored tone, "don't let's have any of your tantrums; one would have thought you had had swing enough for this bout. Come, it's high time to leave off harlequinading, and go home to your father."

In fact, I had a couple of Bow Street officers hold of me. The cruel Sacharissa had proclaimed who I was, and that a reward had been offered throughout the country for any tidings of me; and they had seen a description of me which had been forwarded to the police office in town. Those harpies, therefore, for the mere sake of filthy lucre, were resolved to deliver me over into the hands of my father and the clutches of my pedagogue.

It was in vain that I swore I would not leave my faithful and afflicted Columbine. It was in vain that I tore myself from their grasp and flew to her; and vowed to protect her; and wiped the tears from her cheek, and with them a whole blush that might have vied with the carnation for brilliancy. My persecutors were inflexible; they even seemed to exult in our distress; and to enjoy this theatrical display of dirt, and finery, and tribulation. I was carried off in despair, leaving my Columbine destitute in the wide world; but many a look of agony did I cast back at her, as she stood gazing piteously after me from the brink of Hempstead Hill; so forlorn, so fine, so ragged, so bedraggled, yet so beautiful.

Thus ended my first peep into the world. I returned home, rich in good-for-nothing experience, and dreading the reward I was to receive for my improvement. My reception, however, was quite different from what I had expected. My father had a spice of the devil in him, and did not seem to like me the worse for my freak, which he termed "sowing my wild oats." He happened to have several of his sporting friends to dine with him the very day of my return; they made me tell some of my adventures, and laughed heartily at them. One old fellow, with an outrageously red nose, took to me hugely. I heard him whisper to my father that I was a lad of mettle, and might make something clever; to which my father replied that "I had good points, but was an ill-broken whelp, and required a great deal of the whip." Perhaps this very conversation raised me a little in his esteem, for I found the red-nosed old gentleman was a veteran fox-hunter of the neighborhood, for whose opinion my father had vast deference. Indeed, I believe he would have pardoned anything in me more readily than poetry; which he called a cursed, sneaking, puling, housekeeping employment, the bane of all true manhood. He swore it was unworthy of a youngster of my expectations, who was one day to have so great an estate, and would be able to keep horses and hounds and hire poets to write songs for him into the bargain.

I had now satisfied, for a time, my roving propensity. I had exhausted the poetical feeling. I had been heartily buffeted out of my love for theatrical display. I felt humiliated by my exposure, and was willing to hide my head anywhere for a season; so that I might be out of the way of the ridicule of the world; for I found folks not altogether so indulgent abroad as they were at my father's table. I could not stay at home; the house was intolerably doleful now that my mother was no longer there to cherish me. Everything around spoke mournfully of her. The little flower-garden in which she delighted was all in disorder and overrun with weeds. I attempted, for a day or two, to arrange it, but my heart grew heavier and heavier as I labored. Every little

broken-down flower that I had seen her rear so tenderly seemed to plead in mute eloquence to my feelings. There was a favorite honeysuckle which I had seen her often training with assiduity, and had heard her say it should be the pride of her garden. I found it groveling along the ground, tangled and wild, and twining round every worthless weed, and it struck me as an emblem of myself: a mere scatterling, running to waste and uselessness. I could work no longer in the garden.

My father sent me to pay a visit to my uncle, by way of keeping the old gentleman in mind of me. I was received, as usual, without any expression of discontent; which we always considered equivalent to a hearty welcome. Whether he had ever heard of my strolling freak or not I could not discover; he and his man were both so taciturn. I spent a day or two roaming about the dreary mansion and neglected park; and felt at one time, I believe, a touch of poetry, for I was tempted to drown myself in a fish-pond; I rebuked the evil spirit, however, and it left me. I found the same red-headed boy running wild about the park, but I felt in no humor to hunt him at present. On the contrary, I tried to coax him to me, and to make friends with him, but the young savage was untamable.

When I returned from my uncle's I remained at home for some time, for my father was disposed, he said, to make a man of me. He took me out hunting with him, and I became a great favorite of the red-nosed squire, because I rode at everything; never refused the boldest leap, and was always sure to be in at the death. I used often, however, to offend my father at hunting dinners, by taking the wrong side in politics. My father was amazingly ignorant—so ignorant, in fact, as not to know that he knew nothing. He was stanch, however, to church and king, and full of old-fashioned prejudices. Now, I had picked up a little knowledge in politics and religion during my rambles with the strollers, and found myself capable of setting him right as to many of his antiquated notions. I felt it my duty to do so;

we were apt, therefore, to differ occasionally in the political discussions that sometimes arose at these hunting dinners.

I was at that age when a man knows least and is most vain of his knowledge; and when he is extremely tenacious in defending his opinion upon subjects about which he knows nothing. My father was a hard man for any one to argue with, for he never knew when he was refuted. I sometimes posed him a little, but then he had one argument that always settled the question; he would threaten to knock me down. I believe he at last grew tired of me, because I both out-talked and outrode him. The red-nosed squire, too, got out of conceit of me, because in the heat of the chase I rode over him one day as he and his horse lay sprawling in the dirt. My father, therefore, thought it high time to send me to college; and accordingly to Trinity College at Oxford was I sent.

I had lost my habits of study while at home; and I was not likely to find them again at college. I found that study was not the fashion at college, and that a lad of spirit only ate his terms; and grew wise by dint of knife and fork. I was always prone to follow the fashions of the company into which I fell; so I threw by my books and became a man of spirit. As my father made me a tolerable allowance, notwithstanding the narrowness of his income, having an eye always to my great expectations, I was enabled to appear to advantage among my fellow-students. I cultivated all kinds of sports and exercises. I was one of the most expert oarsmen that rowed on the Isis. I boxed and fenced. I was a keen huntsman, and my chambers in college were always decorated with whips of all kinds, spurs, foils, and boxing gloves. A pair of leather breeches would seem to be throwing one leg out of the half-open drawers, and empty bottles lumbered the bottom of every closet.

I soon grew tired of this, and relapsed into my vein of mere poetical indulgence. I was charmed with Oxford, for it was full of poetry to me. I thought I should never grow tired of wandering about its courts and cloisters, and visiting

the different college halls. I used to love to get in places surrounded by the colleges, where all modern buildings were screened from the sight; and to walk about them in twilight, and see the professors and students sweeping along in the dusk in their caps and gowns. There was complete delusion in the scene. It seemed to transport me among the edifices and the people of old times. It was a great luxury, too, for me to attend the evening service in the new college chapel, and to hear the fine organ and the choir swelling an anthem in that solemn building; where painting and music and architecture seem to combine their grandest effects.

I became a loiterer, also, about the Bodleian library, and a great dipper into books; but too idle to follow any course of study or vein of research. One of my favorite haunts was the beautiful walk, bordered by lofty elms, along the Isis, under the old gray walls of Magdalen College, which goes by the name of Addison's Walk; and was his resort when a student at the college. I used to take a volume of poetry in my hand, and stroll up and down this walk for hours.

My father came to see me at college. He asked me how I came on with my studies; and what kind of hunting there was in the neighborhood. He examined my sporting apparatus; wanted to know if any of the professors were fox-hunters; and whether they were generally good shots; for he suspected this reading so much was rather hurtful to the sight. Such was the only person to whom I was responsible for my improvement: is it matter of wonder, therefore, that I became a confirmed idler?

I do not know how it is, but I cannot be idle long without getting in love. I became deeply smitten with a shopkeeper's daughter in the high street; who in fact was the admiration of many of the students. I wrote several sonnets in praise of her, and spent half of my pocket-money at the shop, in buying articles which I did not want, that I might have an opportunity of speaking to her. Her father, a severe-looking old gentleman, with bright silver buckles and a crisp, curled wig, kept a strict guard on her; as the fathers gen-

erally do upon their daughters in Oxford; and well, they may. I tried to get into his good graces, and to be sociable with him; but in vain. I said several good things in his shop, but he never laughed; he had no relish for wit and humor. He was one of those dry old gentlemen who keep youngsters at bay. He had already brought up two or three daughters, and was experienced in the ways of students. He was as knowing and wary as a gray old badger that has often been hunted. To see him on Sunday, so stiff and starched in his demeanor; so precise in his dress; with his daughter under his arm, and his ivory-headed cane in his hand, was enough to deter all graceless youngsters from approaching.

I managed, however, in spite of his vigilance, to have several conversations with the daughter, as I cheapened articles in the shop. I made terrible long bargains, and examined the articles over and over, before I purchased. In the meantime, I would convey a sonnet or an acrostic under cover of a piece of cambric, or slipped into a pair of stockings; I would whisper soft nonsense into her ear as I haggled about the price; and would squeeze her hand tenderly as I received my halfpence of change, in a bit of whity-brown paper. Let this serve as a hint to all haberdashers who have pretty daughters for shop-girls and young students for customers. I do not know whether my words and looks were very eloquent; but my poetry was irresistible; for, to tell the truth, the girl had some literary taste, and was seldom without a book from the circulating library.

By the divine power of poetry, therefore, which is irresistible with the lovely sex, did I subdue the heart of this fair little haberdasher. We carried on a sentimental correspondence for a time across the counter, and I supplied her with rhyme by the stockingful. At length I prevailed on her to grant me an assignation. But how was it to be effected? Her father kept her always under his eye; she never walked out alone; and the house was locked up the moment that the shop was shut. All these difficulties served but to give zest to the adventure. I proposed that the assignation should

be in her own chamber, into which I would climb at night. The plan was irresistible. A cruel father, a secret lover, and a clandestine meeting! All the little girl's studies from the circulating library seemed about to be realized. But what had I in view in making this assignation? Indeed I know not. I had no evil intentions; nor can I say that I had any good ones. I liked the girl, and wanted to have an opportunity of seeing more of her; and the assignation was made, as I have done many things else, heedlessly and without forethought. I asked myself a few questions of the kind, after all my arrangements were made; but the answers were very unsatisfactory. "Am I to ruin this poor thoughtless girl?" said I to myself. "No!" was the prompt and indignant answer.—"Am I to run away with her?" "Whither—and to what purpose?"—"Well, then, am I to marry her?" "Pah! a man of my expectations marry a shopkeeper's daughter!"—"What, then, am I to do with her?" "Hum—why.—Let me get into her chamber first, and then consider"—and so the self-examination ended.

Well, sir, "come what come might," I stole under cover of the darkness to the dwelling of my *dulcinea*. All was quiet. At the concerted signal her window was gently opened. It was just above the projecting bow-window of her father's shop, which assisted me in mounting. The house was low, and I was enabled to scale the fortress with tolerable ease. I clambered with a beating heart; I reached the casement; I hoisted my body half into the chamber and was welcomed, not by the embraces of my expecting fair one, but by the grasp of the crabbed-looking old father in the crisp curled wig.

I extricated myself from his clutches and endeavored to make my retreat; but I was confounded by his cries of thieves! and robbers! I was bothered, too, by his Sunday cane; which was amazingly busy about my head as I descended; and against which my hat was but a poor protection. Never before had I an idea of the activity of an old man's arm, and hardness of the knob of an ivory-headed

cane. In my hurry and confusion I missed my footing, and fell sprawling on the pavement. I was immediately surrounded by myrmidons, who I doubt not were on the watch for me. Indeed, I was in no situation to escape, for I had sprained my ankle in the fall and could not stand. I was seized as a housebreaker; and to exonerate myself from a greater crime I had to accuse myself of a less. I made known who I was, and why I came there. Alas! the varlets knew it already, and were only amusing themselves at my expense. My perfidious muse had been playing me one of her slippery tricks. The old curmudgeon of a father had found my sonnets and acrostics hid away in holes and corners of his shop; he had no taste for poetry like his daughter, and had instituted a rigorous though silent observation. He had moused upon our letters; detected the ladder of ropes, and prepared everything for my reception. Thus was I ever doomed to be led into scrapes by the muse. Let no man henceforth carry on a secret amour in poetry.

The old man's ire was in some measure appeased by the pummeling of my head and the anguish of my sprain; so he did not put me to death on the spot. He was even humane enough to furnish a shutter, on which I was carried back to college like a wounded warrior. The porter was roused to admit me; the college gate was thrown open for my entry; the affair was blazed abroad the next morning, and became the joke of the college from the buttery to the hall.

I had leisure to repent during several weeks' confinement by my sprain, which I passed in translating Boethius' "Consolations of Philosophy." I received a most tender and ill-spelled letter from my mistress, who had been sent to a relation in Coventry. She protested her innocence of my misfortunes, and vowed to be true to me "till death." I took no notice of the letter, for I was cured, for the present, both of love and poetry. Women, however, are more constant in their attachments than men, whatever philosophers may say to the contrary. I am assured that she actually remained faithful to her vow for several months; but she had

to deal with a cruel father, whose heart was as hard as the knob of his cane. He was not to be touched by tears or poetry; but absolutely compelled her to marry a reputable young tradesman; who made her a happy woman in spite of herself, and of all the rules of romance; and what is more, the mother of several children. They are at this very day a thriving couple and keep a snug corner shop, just opposite the figure of Peeping Tom at Coventry.

I will not fatigue you by any more details of my studies at Oxford, though they were not always as severe as these; nor did I always pay as dear for my lessons. People may say what they please, a studious life has its charms, and there are many places more gloomy than the cloisters of a university.

To be brief, then, I lived on in my usual miscellaneous manner, gradually getting a knowledge of good and evil, until I had attained my twenty-first year. I had scarcely come of age when I heard of the sudden death of my father. The shock was severe, for though he had never treated me with kindness, still he was my father, and at his death I felt myself alone in the world.

I returned home to act as chief mourner at his funeral. It was attended by many of the sportsmen of the county; for he was an important member of their fraternity. According to his request his favorite hunter was led after the hearse. The red-nosed fox-hunter, who had taken a little too much wine at the house, made a maudlin eulogy of the deceased, and wished to give the view-halloo over the grave; but he was rebuked by the rest of the company. They all shook me kindly by the hand, said many consolatory things to me, and invited me to become a member of the hunt in my father's place.

When I found myself alone in my paternal home, a crowd of gloomy feelings came thronging upon me. It was a place that always seemed to sober me, and bring me to reflection. Now, especially, it looked so deserted and melancholy; the furniture displaced about the room; the chairs in groups, as



BUCKTHORNE AND THE SHOPKEEPER'S DAUGHTER.

Irving, Vol. Two, p. 392.

their departed occupants had sat, either in whispering tete-a-tetes, or gossiping clusters; the bottles and decanters and wine-glasses, half emptied, and scattered about the tables—all dreary traces of a funeral festival. I entered the little breakfasting room. There were my father's whip and spurs hanging by the fireplace, and his favorite pointer lying on the hearth-rug. The poor animal came fondling about me, and licked my hand, though he had never before noticed me; and then he looked round the room, and whined, and wagged his tail slightly, and gazed wistfully in my face. I felt the full force of the appeal. "Poor Dash!" said I, "we are both alone in the world, with nobody to care for us, and we'll take care of one another." The dog never quitted me afterward.

I could not go into my mother's room: my heart swelled when I passed within sight of the door. Her portrait hung in the parlor, just over the place where she used to sit. As I cast my eyes on it I thought it looked at me with tenderness, and I burst into tears. My heart had long been seared by living in public schools, and buffeting about among strangers who cared nothing for me; but the recollection of a mother's tenderness was overcoming.

I was not of an age or a temperament to be long depressed. There was a reaction in my system that always brought me up again after every pressure; and indeed my spirits were most buoyant after a temporary prostration. I settled the concerns of the estate as soon as possible; realized my property, which was not very considerable, but which appeared a vast deal to me, having a poetical eye that magnified everything; and finding myself, at the end of a few months, free of all further business or restraint, I determined to go to London and enjoy myself. Why should not I?—I was young, animated, joyous; had plenty of funds for present pleasures, and my uncle's estate in the perspective. Let those mope at college and pore over books, thought I, who have their way to make in the world; it would be ridiculous drudgery in a youth of my expectations.

Well, sir, away to London I rattled in a tandem, deter-

mined to take the town gayly. I passed through several of the villages where I had played the jack-pudding a few years before; and I visited the scenes of many of my adventures and follies, merely from that feeling of melancholy pleasure which we have in stepping again in the footprints of foregone existence, even when they have passed among weeds and briers. I made a circuit in the latter part of my journey, so as to take in West End and Hempstead, the scenes of my last dramatic exploit, and of the battle royal of the booth. As I drove along the ridge of Hempstead Hill, by Jack Straw's castle, I paused at the spot where Columbine and I had sat down so disconsolately in our ragged finery, and looked dubiously upon London. I almost expected to see her again, standing on the hill's brink, "like Niobe all tears"—mournful as Babylon in ruins!

"Poor Columbine!" said I, with a heavy sigh, "thou wert a gallant, generous girl—a true woman, faithful to the distressed, and ready to sacrifice thyself in the cause of worthless man!"

I tried to whistle off the recollection of her; for there was always something of self-reproach with it. I drove gayly along the road, enjoying the stare of hostlers and stable-boys as I managed my horses knowingly down the steep street of Hempstead; when, just at the skirts of the village, one of the traces of my leader came loose. I pulled up; and as the animal was restive and my servant a bungler, I called for assistance to the robustious master of a snug alehouse, who stood at his door with a tankard in his hand. He came readily to assist me, followed by his wife, with her bosom half open, a child in her arms, and two more at her heels. I stared for a moment as if doubting my eyes. I could not be mistaken; in the fat, beer-blown landlord of the alehouse I recognized my old rival Harlequin, and in his slattern spouse, the once trim and dimpling Columbine.

The change of my looks, from youth to manhood, and the change of my circumstances, prevented them from recognizing me. They could not suspect, in the dashing young buck,

fashionably dressed and driving his own equipage, their former comrade, the painted beau, with old peaked hat and long, flimsy, sky-blue coat. My heart yearned with kindness toward Columbine, and I was glad to see her establishment a thriving one. As soon as the harness was adjusted, I tossed a small purse of gold into her ample bosom; and then, pretending to give my horses a hearty cut of the whip, I made the lash curl with a whistling about the sleek sides of ancient Harlequin. The horses dashed off like lightning, and I was whirled out of sight before either of the parties could get over their surprise at my liberal donations. I have always considered this as one of the greatest proofs of my poetical genius. It was distributing poetical justice in perfection.

I now entered London *en cavalier*, and became a blood upon town. I took fashionable lodgings in the West End; employed the first tailor; frequented the regular lounges; gambled a little; lost my money good-humoredly, and gained a number of fashionable good-for-nothing acquaintances. Had I had more industry and ambition in my nature, I might have worked my way to the very height of fashion, as I saw many laborious gentlemen doing around me. But it is a toilsome, an anxious, and an unhappy life; there are few beings so sleepless and miserable as your cultivators of fashionable smiles.

I was quite content with that kind of society which forms the frontiers of fashion, and may be easily taken possession of. I found it a light, easy, productive soil. I had but to go about and sow visiting cards, and I reaped a whole harvest of invitations. Indeed, my figure and address were by no means against me. It was whispered, too, among the young ladies that I was prodigiously clever, and wrote poetry; and the old ladies had ascertained that I was a young gentleman of good family, handsome fortune, and "great expectations."

I now was carried away by the hurry of gay life, so intoxicating to a young man; and which a man of poetical

temperament enjoys so highly on his first tasting of it. That rapid variety of sensations; that whirl of brilliant objects; that succession of pungent pleasures. I had no time for thought; I only felt. I never attempted to write poetry; my poetry seemed all to go off by transpiration. I lived poetry; it was all a poetical dream to me. A mere sensualist knows nothing of the delights of a splendid metropolis. He lives in a round of animal gratifications and heartless habits. But to a young man of poetical feelings it is an ideal world; a scene of enchantment and delusion; his imagination is in perpetual excitement, and gives a spiritual zest to every pleasure.

A season of town-life somewhat sobered me of my intoxication; or rather I was rendered more serious by one of my old complaints—I fell in love. It was with a very pretty, though a very haughty fair one, who had come to London under the care of an old maiden aunt, to enjoy the pleasures of a winter in town, and to get married. There was not a doubt of her commanding a choice of lovers; for she had long been the belle of a little cathedral town; and one of the prebendaries had absolutely celebrated her beauty in a copy of Latin verses.

I paid my court to her, and was favorably received both by her and her aunt. Nay, I had a marked preference shown me over the younger son of a needy baronet, and a captain of dragoons on half pay. I did not absolutely take the field in form, for I was determined not to be precipitate; but I drove my equipage frequently through the street in which she lived, and was always sure to see her at the window; generally with a book in her hand. I resumed my knack at rhyming, and sent her a long copy of verses; anonymously, to be sure; but she knew my handwriting. They displayed, however, the most delightful ignorance on the subject. The young lady showed them to me; wondered who they could be written by; and declared there was nothing in this world she loved so much as poetry: while the maiden aunt would put her pinching spectacles on her nose, and read them, with

blunders in sense and sound that were excruciating to an author's ears; protesting there was nothing equal to them in the whole elegant extracts.

The fashionable season closed without my adventuring to make a declaration, though I certainly had encouragement. I was not perfectly sure that I had effected a lodgment in the young lady's heart; and, to tell the truth, the aunt overdid her part, and was a little too extravagant in her liking of me. I knew that maiden aunts were not apt to be captivated by the mere personal merits of their nieces' admirers, and I wanted to ascertain how much of all this favor I owed to my driving an equipage and having great expectations.

I had received many hints how charming their native town was during the summer months; what pleasant society they had; and what beautiful drives about the neighborhood. They had not, therefore, returned home long, before I made my appearance in dashing style, driving down the principal street. It is an easy thing to put a little quiet cathedral town in a buzz. The very next morning I was seen at prayers, seated in the pew of the reigning belle. All the congregation was in a flutter. The prebends eyed me from their stalls; questions were whispered about the aisles after service, "Who is he?" and "What is he?" and the replies were as usual—"A young gentleman of good family and fortune, and great expectations."

I was pleased with the peculiarities of a cathedral town, where I found I was a personage of some consequence. I was quite a brilliant acquisition to the young ladies of the cathedral circle, who were glad to have a beau that was not in a black coat and clerical wig. You must know that there was a vast distinction between the classes of society of the town. As it was a place of some trade, there were many wealthy inhabitants among the commercial and manufacturing classes, who lived in style and gave many entertainments. Nothing of trade, however, was admitted into the cathedral circle—faugh! the thing could not be thought of. The cathedral circle, therefore, was apt to be very select,

very dignified, and very dull. They had evening parties, at which the old ladies played cards with the prebends, and the young ladies sat and looked on, and shifted from one chair to another about the room, until it was time to go home.

It was difficult to get up a ball, from the want of partners, the cathedral circle being very deficient in dancers; and on those occasions, there was an occasional drafting among the dancing men of the other circle, who, however, were generally regarded with great reserve and condescension by the gentlemen in powdered wigs. Several of the young ladies assured me, in confidence, that they had often looked with a wistful eye at the gayety of the other circle, where there was such plenty of young beaux, and where they all seemed to enjoy themselves so merrily; but that it would be degradation to think of descending from their sphere.

I admired the degree of old-fashioned ceremony and superannuated courtesy that prevailed in this little place. The bowings and courtesying that would take place about the cathedral porch after morning service, where knots of old gentlemen and ladies would collect together to ask after each other's health, and settle the card party for the evening. The little presents of fruits and delicacies, and the thousand petty messages that would pass from house to house; for in a tranquil community like this, living entirely at ease, and having little to do, little duties and little civilities and little amusements fill up the day. I have smiled, as I looked from my window on a quiet street near the cathedral, in the middle of a warm summer day, to see a corpulent powdered footman in rich livery carrying a small tart on a large silver salver. A dainty titbit, sent, no doubt, by some worthy old dowager to top off the dinner of her favorite prebend.

Nothing could be more delectable, also, than the breaking up of one of their evening card parties. Such shaking of hands; such mobbing up in cloaks and tippets! There were two or three old sedan chairs that did the duty of the whole place; though the greater part made their exit in clogs or pattens, with a footman or waiting-maid carrying a lantern

in advance; and at a certain hour of the night the clank of pattens and the gleam of these jack lanterns, here and there, about the quiet little town, gave notice that the cathedral card party had dissolved, and the luminaries were severally seeking their homes. To such a community, therefore, or at least to the female part of it, the accession of a gay, dashing young beau was a matter of some importance. The old ladies eyed me with complacency through their spectacles, and the young ladies pronounced me divine. Everybody received me favorably, excepting the gentleman who had written the Latin verses on the belle.—Not that he was jealous of my success with the lady, for he had no pretensions to her; but he heard my verses praised wherever he went, and he could not endure a rival with the muse.

I was thus carrying everything before me. I was the Adonis of the cathedral circle; when one evening there was a public ball which was attended likewise by the gentry of the neighborhood. I took great pains with my toilet on the occasion, and I had never looked better. I had determined that night to make my grand assault on the heart of the young lady, to batter it with all my forces, and the next morning to demand a surrender in due form.

I entered the ball-room amid a buzz and flutter, which generally took place among the young ladies on my appearance. I was in fine spirits; for, to tell the truth, I had exhilarated myself by a cheerful glass of wine on the occasion. I talked, and rattled, and said a thousand silly things, slapdash, with all the confidence of a man sure of his auditors; and everything had its effect.

In the midst of my triumph I observed a little knot gathering together in the upper part of the room. By degrees it increased. A tittering broke out there; and glances were cast round at me, and then there would be fresh tittering. Some of the young ladies would hurry away to distant parts of the room, and whisper to their friends; wherever they went there was still this tittering and glancing at me. I did not know what to make of all this. I looked at myself from

head to foot; and peeped at my back in a glass, to see if anything was odd about my person; any awkward exposure; any whimsical tag hanging out—no—everything was right. I was a perfect picture.

I determined that it must be some choice saying of mine that was bandied about in this knot of merry beauties, and I determined to enjoy one of my good things in the rebound.

I stepped gently, therefore, up the room, smiling at every one as I passed, who, I must say, all smiled and tittered in return. I approached the group, smirking and perking my chin, like a man who is full of pleasant feeling, and sure of being well received. The cluster of little belles opened as I advanced.

Heavens and earth! whom should I perceive in the midst of them but my early and tormenting flame, the everlasting Sacharissa! She was grown up, it is true, into the full beauty of womanhood, but showed by the provoking merriement of her countenance that she perfectly recollected me and the ridiculous flagellations of which she had twice been the cause.

I saw at once the exterminating cloud of ridicule that was bursting over me. My crest fell. The flame of love went suddenly out in my bosom; or was extinguished by overwhelming shame. How I got down the room I know not; I fancied every one tittering at me. Just as I reached the door I caught a glance of my mistress and her aunt listening to the whispers of my poetic rival; the old lady raising her hands and eyes, and the face of the young one lighted up with scorn ineffable. I paused to see no more; but made two steps from the top of the stairs to the bottom. The next morning, before sunrise, I beat a retreat; and did not feel the blushes cool from my tingling cheeks until I had lost sight of the old towers of the cathedral.

I now returned to town thoughtful and crestfallen. My money was nearly spent, for I had lived freely and without calculation. The dream of love was over, and the reign of pleasure at an end. I determined to retrench while I had

yet a trifle left; so selling my equipage and horses for half their value, I quietly put the money in my pocket and turned pedestrian. I had not a doubt that, with my great expectations, I could at any time raise funds, either on usury or by borrowing; but I was principled against both one and the other; and resolved, by strict economy, to make my slender purse hold out until my uncle should give up the ghost; or, rather, the estate.

I stayed at home, therefore, and read, and would have written, but I had already suffered too much from my poetical productions, which had generally involved me in some ridiculous scrape. I gradually acquired a rusty look, and had a straitened, money-borrowing air, upon which the world began to shy me. I have never felt disposed to quarrel with the world for its conduct. It has always used me well. When I have been flush, and gay, and disposed for society, it has caressed me; and when I have been pinched, and reduced, and wished to be alone, why, it has left me alone; and what more could a man desire?—Take my word for it, this world is a more obliging world than people generally represent it.

Well, sir, in the midst of my retrenchment, my retirement, and my studiousness, I received news that my uncle was dangerously ill. I hastened on the wings of an heir's affections to receive his dying breath and his last testament. I found him attended by his faithful valet, old Iron John; by the woman who occasionally worked about the house; and by the foxy-headed boy, young Orson, whom I had occasionally hunted about the park.

Iron John gasped a kind of asthmatical salutation as I entered the room, and received me with something almost like a smile of welcome. The woman sat blubbering at the foot of the bed; and the foxy-headed Orson, who had now grown up to be a lubberly lout, stood gazing in stupid vacancy at a distance.

My uncle lay stretched upon his back. The chamber was without fire or any of the comforts of a sick-room. The cob-

webs flaunted from the ceiling. The tester was covered with dust, and the curtains were tattered. From underneath the bed peeped out one end of his strong box. Against the wainscot were suspended rusty blunderbusses, horse pistols, and a cut-and-thrust sword, with which he had fortified his room to defend his life and treasure. He had employed no physician during his illness, and from the scanty relics lying on the table seemed almost to have denied himself the assistance of a cook.

When I entered the room he was lying motionless; his eyes fixed and his mouth open; at the first look I thought him a corpse. The noise of my entrance made him turn his head. At the sight of me a ghastly smile came over his face, and his glazing eye gleamed with satisfaction. It was the only smile he had ever given me, and it went to my heart. "Poor old man!" thought I, "why would you not let me love you?—Why would you force me to leave you thus desolate, when I see that my presence has the power to cheer you?"

"Nephew," said he, after several efforts, and in a low gasping voice—"I am glad you are come. I shall now die with satisfaction. Look," said he, raising his withered hand and pointing—"look—in that box on the table you will find that I have not forgotten you."

I pressed his hand to my heart, and the tears stood in my eyes. I sat down by his bedside, and watched him, but he never spoke again. My presence, however, gave him evident satisfaction—for every now and then, as he looked at me, a vague smile would come over his visage, and he would feebly point to the sealed box on the table. As the day wore away, his life seemed to wear away with it. Toward sunset, his hand sunk on the bed and lay motionless; his eyes grew glazed; his mouth remained open, and thus he gradually died.

I could not but feel shocked at this absolute extinction of my kindred. I dropped a tear of real sorrow over this strange old man, who had thus reserved his smile of kindness to his death-bed; like an evening sun after a gloomy day, just

shining out to set in darkness. Leaving the corpse in charge of the domestics, I retired for the night.

It was a rough night. The winds seemed as if singing my uncle's requiem about the mansion; and the bloodhounds howled without as if they knew of the death of their old master. Iron John almost grudged me the tallow candle to burn in my apartment and light up its dreariness; so accustomed had he been to starveling economy. I could not sleep. The recollection of my uncle's dying scene and the dreary sounds about the house, affected my mind. These, however, were succeeded by plans for the future, and I lay awake the greater part of the night, indulging the poetical anticipation how soon I would make these old walls ring with cheerful life, and restore the hospitality of my mother's ancestors.

My uncle's funeral was decent, but private. I knew there was nobody that respected his memory; and I was determined that none should be summoned to sneer over his funeral wines, and make merry at his grave. He was buried in the church of the neighboring village, though it was not the burying place of his race; but he had expressly enjoined that he should not be buried with his family; he had quarreled with the most of them when living, and he carried his resentments even into the grave.

I defrayed the expenses of the funeral out of my own purse, that I might have done with the undertakers at once, and clear the ill-omened birds from the premises. I invited the parson of the parish and the lawyer from the village to attend at the house the next morning and hear the reading of the will. I treated them to an excellent breakfast, a profusion that had not been seen at the house for many a year. As soon as the breakfast things were removed, I summoned Iron John, the woman, and the boy, for I was particular in having every one present and proceeding regularly. The box was placed on the table. All was silence. I broke the seal; raised the lid; and beheld—not the will, but my accursed poem of “Doubting Castle and Giant Despair!”

Could any mortal have conceived that this old withered

man, so taciturn, and apparently lost to feeling, could have treasured up for years the thoughtless pleasantry of a boy, to punish him with such cruel ingenuity? I now could account for his dying smile, the only one he had ever given me. He had been a grave man all his life; it was strange that he should die in the enjoyment of a joke; and it was hard that that joke should be at my expense.

The lawyer and the parson seemed at a loss to comprehend the matter. "Here must be some mistake," said the lawyer, "there is no will here."

"Oh," said Iron John, creaking forth his rusty jaws, "if it is a will you are looking for, I believe I can find one."

He retired with the same singular smile with which he had greeted me on my arrival, and which I now apprehended boded me no good. In a little while he returned with a will perfect at all points, properly signed and sealed and witnessed; worded with horrible correctness; in which he left large legacies to Iron John and his daughter, and the residue of his fortune to the foxy-headed boy; who, to my utter astonishment, was his son by this very woman; he having married her privately, and, as I verily believe, for no other purpose than to have an heir, and so balk my father and his issue of the inheritance. There was one little proviso, in which he mentioned that having discovered his nephew to have a pretty turn for poetry, he presumed he had no occasion for wealth: he recommended him, however, to the patronage of his heir; and requested that he might have a garret, rent free, in Doubting Castle.

GRAVE REFLECTIONS OF A DISAPPOINTED MAN

MR. BUCKTHORNE had paused at the death of his uncle, and the downfall of his great expectations, which formed, as he said, an epoch in his history; and it was not until some

little time afterward, and in a very sober mood, that he resumed his party-colored narrative.

After leaving the domains of my defunct uncle, said he, when the gate closed between me and what was once to have been mine, I felt thrust out naked into the world, and completely abandoned to fortune. What was to become of me? I had been brought up to nothing but expectations, and they had all been disappointed. I had no relations to look to for counsel or assistance. The world seemed all to have died away from me. Wave after wave of relationship had ebbed off, and I was left a mere hulk upon the strand. I am not apt to be greatly cast down, but at this time I felt sadly disheartened. I could not realize my situation, nor form a conjecture how I was to get forward.

I was now to endeavor to make money. The idea was new and strange to me. It was like being asked to discover the philosopher's stone. I had never thought about money, other than to put my hand into my pocket and find it, or if there were none there, to wait until a new supply came from home. I had considered life as a mere space of time to be filled up with enjoyments; but to have it portioned out into long hours and days of toil, merely that I might gain bread to give me strength to toil on; to labor but for the purpose of perpetuating a life of labor, was new and appalling to me. This may appear a very simple matter to some, but it will be understood by every unlucky wight in my predicament, who has had the misfortune of being born to great expectations.

I passed several days in rambling about the scenes of my boyhood; partly because I absolutely did not know what to do with myself, and partly because I did not know that I should ever see them again. I clung to them as one clings to a wreck, though he knows he must eventually cast himself loose and swim for his life. I sat down on a hill within sight of my paternal home, but I did not venture to approach it, for I felt compunction at the thoughtlessness with which I had dissipated my patrimony. But was I to blame, when

I had the rich possessions of my curmudgeon of an uncle in expectation?

The new possessor of the place was making great alterations. The house was almost rebuilt. The trees which stood about it were cut down; my mother's flower-garden was thrown into a lawn; all was undergoing a change. I turned my back upon it with a sigh, and rambled to another part of the country.

How thoughtful a little adversity makes one. As I came within sight of the schoolhouse where I had so often been flogged in the cause of wisdom, you would hardly have recognized the truant boy who but a few years since had eloped so heedlessly from its walls. I leaned over the paling of the playground, and watched the scholars at their games, and looked to see if there might not be some urchin among them, like I was once, full of gay dreams about life and the world. The playground seemed smaller than when I used to sport about it. The house and park, too, of the neighboring squire, the father of the cruel Sacharissa, had shrunk in size and diminished in magnificence. The distant hills no longer appeared so far off, and, alas! no longer awakened ideas of a fairy land beyond.

As I was rambling pensively through a neighboring meadow, in which I had many a time gathered primroses, I met the very pedagogue who had been the tyrant and dread of my boyhood. I had sometimes vowed to myself, when suffering under his rod, that I would have my revenge if ever I met him when I had grown to be a man. The time had come; but I had no disposition to keep my vow. The few years which had matured me into a vigorous man had shrunk him into decrepitude. He appeared to have had a paralytic stroke. I looked at him, and wondered that this poor helpless mortal could have been an object of terror to me! That I should have watched with anxiety the glance of that failing eye, or dreaded the power of that trembling hand! He tottered feebly along the path, and had some difficulty in getting over a stile. I ran and assisted him.

He looked at me with surprise, but did not recognize me, and made a low bow of humility and thanks. I had no disposition to make myself known, for I felt that I had nothing to boast of. The pains he had taken and the pains he had inflicted had been equally useless. His repeated predictions were fully verified, and I felt that little Jack Buckthorne, the idle boy, had grown up to be a very good-for-nothing man.

This is all very comfortless detail; but as I have told you of my follies, it is meet that I show you how for once I was schooled for them.

The most thoughtless of mortals will some time or other have this day of gloom, when he will be compelled to reflect. I felt on this occasion as if I had a kind of penance to perform, and I made a pilgrimage in expiation of my past levity.

Having passed a night at Leamington, I set off by a private path which leads up a hill, through a grove, and across quiet fields, until I came to the small village or rather hamlet of Lenington. I sought the village church. It is an old low edifice of gray stone on the brow of a small hill, looking over fertile fields to where the proud towers of Warwick Castle lifted themselves against the distant horizon. A part of the churchyard is shaded by large trees. Under one of these my mother lay buried. You have, no doubt, thought me a light, heartless being. I thought myself so—but there are moments of adversity which let us into some feelings of our nature, to which we might otherwise remain perpetual strangers.

I sought my mother's grave. The weeds were already matted over it, and the tombstone was half hid among nettles. I cleared them away and they stung my hands; but I was heedless of the pain, for my heart ached too severely. I sat down on the grave, and read over and over again the epitaph on the stone. It was simple, but it was true. I had written it myself. I had tried to write a poetical epitaph, but in vain; my feelings refused to utter themselves in rhyme. My heart had gradually been filling during my lonely wanderings; it was now charged to the brim and over-

flowed. I sank upon the grave and buried my face in the tall grass and wept like a child. Yes, I wept in manhood upon the grave, as I had in infancy upon the bosom of my mother. Alas! how little do we appreciate a mother's tenderness while living! How heedless are we, in youth, of all her anxieties and kindness. But when she is dead and gone; when the cares and coldness of the world come withering to our hearts; when we find how hard it is to find true sympathy, how few love us for ourselves, how few will befriend us in our misfortunes; then it is we think of the mother we have lost. It is true I had always loved my mother, even in my most heedless days; but I felt how inconsiderate and ineffectual had been my love. My heart melted as I retraced the days of infancy, when I was led by a mother's hand and rocked to sleep in a mother's arms, and was without care or sorrow. "Oh, my mother!" exclaimed I, burying my face again in the grass of the grave—"Oh, that I were once more by your side; sleeping, never to wake again, on the cares and troubles of this world!"

I am not naturally of a morbid temperament, and the violence of my emotion gradually exhausted itself. It was a hearty, honest, natural discharge of griefs which had been slowly accumulating, and gave me wonderful relief. I rose from the grave as if I had been offering up a sacrifice, and I felt as if that sacrifice had been accepted.

I sat down again on the grass, and plucked, one by one, the weeds from her grave; the tears trickled more slowly down my cheeks, and ceased to be bitter. It was a comfort to think that she had died before sorrow and poverty came upon her child, and that all his great expectations were blasted.

I leaned my cheek upon my hand and looked upon the landscape. Its quiet beauty soothed me. The whistle of a peasant from an adjoining field came cheerily to my ear. I seemed to respire hope and comfort with the free air that whispered through the leaves and played lightly with my hair, and dried the tears upon my cheek. A lark, rising

from the field before me, and leaving, as it were, a stream of song behind him as he rose, lifted my fancy with him. He hovered in the air just above the place where the towers of Warwick Castle marked the horizon; and seemed as if fluttering with delight at his own melody. "Surely," thought I, "if there were such a thing as transmigration of souls, this might be taken for some poet, let loose from earth, but still reveling in song, and caroling about fair fields and lordly towns."

At this moment the long forgotten feeling of poetry rose within me. A thought sprung at once into my mind: "I will become an author," said I. "I have hitherto indulged in poetry as a pleasure, and it has brought me nothing but pain. Let me try what it will do, when I cultivate it with devotion as a pursuit."

The resolution, thus suddenly aroused within me, heaved a load from off my heart. I felt a confidence in it from the very place where it was formed. It seemed as though my mother's spirit whispered it to me from her grave. "I will henceforth," said I, "endeavor to be all that she fondly imagined me. I will endeavor to act as if she were witness of my actions. I will endeavor to acquit myself in such manner that when I revisit her grave there may, at least, be no compunctious bitterness in my tears."

I bowed down and kissed the turf in solemn attestation of my vow. I plucked some primroses that were growing there and laid them next my heart. I left the churchyard with my spirits once more lifted up, and set out a third time for London, in the character of an author.

Here my companion made a pause, and I waited in anxious suspense; hoping to have a whole volume of literary life unfolded to me. He seemed, however, to have sunk into a fit of pensive musing; and when after some time I gently roused him by a question or two as to his literary career, "No," said he, smiling, "over that part of my story I wish to leave a cloud. Let the mysteries of the craft rest sacred for

me. Let those who have never adventured into the republic of letters still look upon it as a fairy land. Let them suppose the author the very being they picture him from his works: I am not the man to mar their illusion. I am not the man to hint, while one is admiring the silken web of Persia, that it has been spun from the entrails of a miserable worm."

"Well," said I, "if you will tell me nothing of your literary history, let me know at least if you have had any further intelligence from Doubting Castle."

"Willingly," replied he, "though I have but little to communicate."

THE BOOBY SQUIRE

A LONG time elapsed, said Buckthorne, without my receiving any accounts of my cousin and his estate. Indeed, I felt so much soreness on the subject that I wished, if possible, to shut it from my thoughts. At length chance took me into that part of the country, and I could not refrain from making some inquiries.

I learned that my cousin had grown up ignorant, self-willed, and clownish. His ignorance and clownishness had prevented his mingling with the neighboring gentry. In spite of his great fortune he had been unsuccessful in an attempt to gain the hand of the daughter of the parson, and had at length shrunk into the limits of such society as a mere man of wealth can gather in a country neighborhood.

He kept horses and hounds and a roaring table, at which were collected the loose livers of the country round and the shabby gentlemen of a village in the vicinity. When he could get no other company he would smoke and drink with his own servants, who in their turn fleeced and despised him. Still, with all this apparent prodigality, he had a leaven of the old man in him, which showed that he was his trueborn son. He lived far within his income, was vulgar in his ex-

penses, and penurious on many points on which a gentleman would be extravagant. His house servants were obliged occasionally to work on the estate, and part of the pleasure grounds were plowed up and devoted to husbandry.

His table, though plentiful, was coarse; his liquors, strong and bad; and more ale and whisky were expended in his establishment than generous wine. He was loud and arrogant at his own table, and exacted a rich man's homage from his vulgar and obsequious guests.

As to Iron John, his old grandfather, he had grown impatient of the tight hand his own grandson kept over him, and quarreled with him soon after he came to the estate. The old man had retired to a neighboring village, where he lived on the legacy of his late master, in a small cottage, and was as seldom seen out of it as a rat out of his hole in daylight.

The cub, like Caliban, seemed to have an instinctive attachment to his mother. She resided with him; but, from long habit, she acted more as a servant than as mistress of the mansion; for she toiled in all the domestic drudgery, and was oftener in the kitchen than the parlor. Such was the information which I collected of my rival cousin, who had so unexpectedly elbowed me out of all my expectations.

I now felt an irresistible hankering to pay a visit to this scene of my boyhood; and to get a peep at the odd kind of life that was passing within the mansion of my maternal ancestors. I determined to do so in disguise. My booby cousin had never seen enough of me to be very familiar with my countenance, and a few years make great difference between youth and manhood. I understood he was a breeder of cattle and proud of his stock. I dressed myself, therefore, as a substantial farmer, and with the assistance of a red scratch that came low down on my forehead, made a complete change in my physiognomy.

It was past three o'clock when I arrived at the gate of the park, and was admitted by an old woman, who was washing in a dilapidated building which had once been a

porter's lodge. I advanced up the remains of a noble avenue, many of the trees of which had been cut down and sold for timber. The grounds were in scarcely better keeping than during my uncle's lifetime. The grass was overgrown with weeds, and the trees wanted pruning and clearing of dead branches. Cattle were grazing about the lawns, and ducks and geese swimming in the fish-ponds.

The road to the house bore very few traces of carriage wheels, as my cousin received few visitors but such as came on foot or horseback, and never used a carriage himself. Once, indeed, as I was told, he had had the old family carriage drawn out from among the dust and cobwebs of the coach-house and furbished up, and had drove, with his mother, to the village church to take formal possession of the family pew; but there was such hooting and laughing after them as they passed through the village, and such giggling and bantering about the church door, that the pageant had never made a reappearance.

As I approached the house, a legion of whelps sallied out barking at me, accompanied by the low howling, rather than barking, of two old wornout bloodhounds, which I recognized for the ancient life-guards of my uncle. The house had still a neglected, random appearance, though much altered for the better since my last visit. Several of the windows were broken and patched up with boards; and others had been bricked up to save taxes. I observed smoke, however, rising from the chimneys; a phenomenon rarely witnessed in the ancient establishment. On passing that part of the house where the dining-room was situated, I heard the sound of boisterous merriment; where three or four voices were talking at once, and oaths and laughter were horribly mingled.

The uproar of the dogs had brought a servant to the door, a tall, hard-fisted country clown, with a livery coat put over the undergarments of a plowman. I requested to see the master of the house, but was told he was at dinner with some "gemmen" of the neighborhood. I made known my business, and sent in to know if I might talk with the

master about his cattle; for I felt a great desire to have a peep at him at his orgies. Word was returned that he was engaged with company, and could not attend to business, but that if I would "step in and take a drink of something, I was heartily welcome." I accordingly entered the hall, where whips and hats of all kinds and shapes were lying on an oaken table; two or three clownish servants were lounging about; everything had a look of confusion and carelessness.

The apartments through which I passed had the same air of departed gentility and sluttish housekeeping. The once rich curtains were faded and dusty; the furniture greased and tarnished. On entering the dining-room I found a number of odd, vulgar-looking, rustic gentlemen seated round a table, on which were bottles, decanters, tankards, pipes, and tobacco. Several dogs were lying about the room, or sitting and watching their masters, and one was gnawing a bone under a side-table.

The master of the feast sat at the head of the board. He was greatly altered. He had grown thick-set and rather gummy, with a fiery, foxy head of hair. There was a singular mixture of foolishness, arrogance, and conceit in his countenance. He was dressed in a vulgarly fine style, with leather breeches, a red waistcoat, and green coat, and was evidently, like his guests, a little flushed with drinking. The whole company stared at me with a whimsical muggy look, like men whose senses were a little obfuscated by beer rather than wine.

My cousin (God forgive me! the appellation sticks in my throat), my cousin invited me with awkward civility, or, as he intended it, condescension, to sit to the table and drink. We talked, as usual, about the weather, the crops, politics, and hard times. My cousin was a loud politician, and evidently accustomed to talk without contradiction at his own table. He was amazingly loyal, and talked of standing by the throne to the last guinea, "as every gentleman of fortune should do." The village exciseman, who was half

asleep, could just ejaculate, "very true," to everything he said.

The conversation turned upon cattle; he boasted of his breed, his mode of managing it, and of the general management of his estate. This unluckily drew on a history of the place and of the family. He spoke of my late uncle with the greatest irreverence, which I could easily forgive. He mentioned my name, and my blood began to boil. He described my frequent visits to my uncle when I was a lad, and I found the varlet, even at that time, imp as he was, had known that he was to inherit the estate.

He described the scene of my uncle's death, and the opening of the will, with a degree of coarse humor that I had not expected from him; and, vexed as I was, I could not help joining in the laugh; for I have always relished a joke, even though made at my own expense. He went on to speak of my various pursuits, my strolling freak, and that somewhat nettled me. At length he talked of my parents. He ridiculed my father: I stomached even that, though with great difficulty. He mentioned my mother with a sneer—and in an instant he lay sprawling at my feet.

Here a scene of tumult succeeded. The table was nearly overturned. Bottles, glasses, and tankards rolled crashing and clattering about the floor. The company seized hold of both of us to keep us from doing further mischief. I struggled to get loose, for I was boiling with fury. My cousin defied me to strip and fight him on the lawn. I agreed: for I felt the strength of a giant in me, and I longed to pummel him soundly.

Away then we were borne. A ring was formed. I had a second assigned me in true boxing style. My cousin, as he advanced to fight, said something about his generosity in showing me such fair play, when I had made such an unprovoked attack upon him at his own table.

"Stop there!" cried I, in a rage—"unprovoked!—know that I am John Buckthorne, and you have insulted the memory of my mother."

The lout was suddenly struck by what I said. He drew back and reflected for a moment.

"Nay, damn it," said he, "that's too much—that's clear another thing. I've a mother myself, and no one shall speak ill of her, bad as she is."

He paused again. Nature seemed to have a rough struggle in his rude bosom.

"Damn it, cousin," cried he, "I'm sorry for what I said. Thou'st served me right in knocking me down, and I like thee the better for it. Here's my hand. Come and live with me, and damme but the best room in the house, and the best horse in the stable, shall be at thy service."

I declare to you I was strongly moved at this instance of nature breaking her way through such a lump of flesh. I forgave the fellow in a moment all his crimes of having been born in wedlock and inheriting my estate. I shook the hand he offered me, to convince him that I bore him no ill will; and then, making my way through the gaping crowd of toad-eaters, bade adieu to my uncle's domains forever. This is the last I have seen or heard of my cousin, or of the domestic concerns of Doubting Castle.

THE STROLLING MANAGER

As I was walking one morning with Buckthorne, near one of the principal theaters, he directed my attention to a group of those equivocal beings that may often be seen hovering about the stage-doors of theaters. They were marvelously ill-favored in their attire, their coats buttoned up to their chins; yet they wore their hats smartly on one side, and had a certain knowing, dirty-gentlemanlike air, which is common to the subalterns of the drama. Buckthorne knew them well by early experience.

These, said he, are the ghosts of departed kings and heroes; fellows who sway scepters and truncheons; com-

mand kingdoms and armies; and after giving away realms and treasures over night, have scarce a shilling to pay for a breakfast in the morning. Yet they have the true vagabond abhorrence of all useful and industrious employment; and they have their pleasures too: one of which is to lounge in this way in the sunshine, at the stage-door, during rehearsals, and make hackneyed theatrical jokes on all passers-by.

Nothing is more traditional and legitimate than the stage. Old scenery, old clothes, old sentiments, old ranting, and old jokes, are handed down from generation to generation; and will probably continue to be so, until time shall be no more. Every hanger-on of a theater becomes a wag by inheritance, and flourishes about at tap-rooms and six-penny clubs, with the property jokes of the green-room.

While amusing ourselves with reconnoitering this group, we noticed one in particular who appeared to be the oracle. He was a weather-beaten veteran, a little bronzed by time and beer, who had, no doubt, grown gray in the parts of robbers, cardinals, Roman senators, and walking noblemen.

"There's something in the set of that hat, and the turn of that physiognomy, that is extremely familiar to me," said Buckthorne. He looked a little closer. "I cannot be mistaken," added he, "that must be my old brother of the truncheon, Flimsey, the tragic hero of the strolling company."

It was he in fact. The poor fellow showed evident signs that times were hard with him; he was so finely and shabbily dressed. His coat was somewhat threadbare, and of the Lord Townly cut; single-breasted, and scarcely capable of meeting in front of his body; which, from long intimacy, had acquired the symmetry and robustness of a beer-barrel. He wore a pair of dingy white stockinet pantaloons, which had much ado to reach his waistcoat; a great quantity of dirty cravat; and a pair of old russet colored tragedy boots.

When his companions had dispersed, Buckthorne drew him aside and made himself known to him. The tragic veteran could scarcely recognize him, or believe that he was

really his quondam associate "little gentleman Jack." Buckthorne invited him to a neighboring coffee-house to talk over old times; and in the course of a little while we were put in possession of his history in brief.

He had continued to act the heroes in the strolling company for some time after Buckthorne had left it, or rather had been driven from it so abruptly. At length the manager died, and the troupe was thrown into confusion. Every one aspired to the crown; every one was for taking the lead; and the manager's widow, although a tragedy queen, and a brimstone to boot, pronounced it utterly impossible to keep any control over such a set of tempestuous rascallions.

Upon this hint I spoke, said Flimsy—I stepped forward, and offered my services in the most effectual way. They were accepted. In a week's time I married the widow and succeeded to the throne. "The funeral baked meats did coldly furnish forth the marriage table," as Hamlet says. But the ghost of my predecessor never haunted me; and I inherited crowns, scepters, bowls, daggers, and all the stage trappings and trumpery, not omitting the widow, without the least molestation.

I now led a flourishing life of it; for our company was pretty strong and attractive, and as my wife and I took the heavy parts of tragedy, it was a great saving to the treasury. We carried off the palm from all the rival shows at country fairs; and I assure you we have even drawn full houses, and been applauded by the critics at Bartlemy Fair itself, though we had Astley's troupe, the Irish giant, and "the death of Nelson" in waxwork to contend against.

I soon began to experience, however, the cares of command. I discovered that there were cabals breaking out in the company, headed by the clown, who you may recollect was a terribly peevish, fractious fellow, and always in ill-humor. I had a great mind to turn him off at once, but I could not do without him, for there was not a droller scoundrel on the stage. His very shape was comic, for he had but to turn his back upon the audience and all the ladies

were ready to die with laughing. He felt his importance, and took advantage of it. He would keep the audience in a continual roar, and then come behind the scenes and fret and fume and play the very devil. I excused a great deal in him, however, knowing that comic actors are a little prone to this infirmity of temper.

I had another trouble of a nearer and dearer nature to struggle with; which was, the affection of my wife. As ill luck would have it, she took it into her head to be very fond of me, and became intolerably jealous. I could not keep a pretty girl in the company, and hardly dared embrace an ugly one, even when my part required it. I have known her to reduce a fine lady to tatters, "to very rags," as Hamlet says, in an instant, and destroy one of the very best dresses in the wardrobe, merely because she saw me kiss her at the side scenes—though I give you my honor it was done merely by way of rehearsal.

This was doubly annoying, because I have a natural liking to pretty faces, and wish to have them about me; and because they are indispensable to the success of a company at a fair, where one has to vie with so many rival theaters. But when once a jealous wife gets a freak in her head there's no use in talking of interest or anything else. Egad, sirs, I have more than once trembled when, during a fit of her tantrums, she was playing high tragedy, and flourishing her thin dagger on the stage, lest she should give way to her humor and stab some fancied rival in good earnest.

I went on better, however, than could be expected, considering the weakness of my flesh and the violence of my rib. I had not a much worse time of it than old Jupiter, whose spouse was continually ferreting out some new intrigue and making the heavens almost too hot to hold him.

At length, as luck would have it, we were performing at a country fair, when I understood the theater of a neighboring town to be vacant. I had always been desirous to be enrolled in a settled company, and the height of my desire was to get on a par with a brother-in-law, who was manager

of a regular theater, and who had looked down upon me. Here was an opportunity not to be neglected. I concluded an agreement with the proprietors, and in a few days opened the theater with great eclat.

Behold me now at the summit of my ambition, "the high topgallant of my joy," as Thomas says. No longer a chieftain of a wandering tribe, but the monarch of a legitimate throne—and entitled to call even the great potentates of Covent Garden and Drury Lane cousin.

You no doubt think my happiness complete. Alas, sir! I was one of the most uncomfortable dogs living. No one knows, who has not tried, the miseries of a manager; but, above all, of a country manager—no one can conceive the contentions and quarrels within doors, the oppressions and vexations from without.

I was pestered with the bloods and loungers of a country town, who infested my green-room, and played the mischief among my actresses. But there was no shaking them off. It would have been ruin to affront them; for, though troublesome friends, they would have been dangerous enemies. Then there were the village critics and village amateurs, who were continually tormenting me with advice, and getting into a passion if I would not take it—especially the village doctor and the village attorney; who had both been to London occasionally, and knew what acting should be.

I had also to manage as arrant a crew of scapegraces as were ever collected together within the walls of a theater. I had been obliged to combine my original troupe with some of the former troupe of the theater, who were favorites with the public. Here was a mixture that produced perpetual ferment. They were all the time either fighting or frolicking with each other, and I scarcely knew which mood was least troublesome. If they quarreled, everything went wrong; and if they were friends, they were continually playing off some confounded prank upon each other, or upon me; for I had unhappily acquired among them the character

of an easy, good-natured fellow, the worst character that a manager can possess.

Their waggers at times drove me almost crazy; for there is nothing so vexatious as the hackneyed tricks and hoaxes and pleasantries of a veteran band of theatrical vagabonds. I relished them well enough, it is true, while I was merely one of the company, but as manager I found them detestable. They were incessantly bringing some disgrace upon the theater by their tavern frolics, and their pranks about the country town. All my lectures upon the importance of keeping up the dignity of the profession and the respectability of the company were in vain. The villains could not sympathize with the delicate feelings of a man in station. They even trifled with the seriousness of stage business. I have had the whole piece interrupted and a crowded audience of at least twenty-five pounds kept waiting, because the actors had hid away the breeches of *Rosalind*; and have known *Hamlet* stalk solemnly on to deliver his soliloquy, with a dish-clout pinned to his skirts. Such are the baleful consequences of a manager's getting a character for good nature.

I was intolerably annoyed, too, by the great actors who came down *starring*, as it is called, from London. Of all baneful influences, keep me from that of a London star. A first-rate actress, going the rounds of the country theaters, is as bad as a blazing comet, whisking about the heavens, and shaking fire, and plagues, and discords from its tail.

The moment one of these "heavenly bodies" appeared on my horizon, I was sure to be in hot water. My theater was overrun by provincial dandies, copper-washed counterfeits of Bond Street loungers; who are always proud to be in the train of an actress from town, and anxious to be thought on exceeding good terms with her. It was really a relief to me when some random young nobleman would come in pursuit of the bait, and awe all this small fry to a distance. I have always felt myself more at ease with a nobleman than with the dandy of a country town.

And then the injuries I suffered in my personal dignity

and my managerial authority from the visits of these great London actors. Sir, I was no longer master of myself or my throne. I was hectored and lectured in my own green-room, and made an absolute nincompoop on my own stage. There is no tyrant so absolute and capricious as a London star at a country theater.

I dreaded the sight of all of them; and yet if I did not engage them I was sure of having the public clamorous against me. They drew full houses, and appeared to be making my fortune; but they swallowed up all the profits by their insatiable demands. They were absolute tape-worms to my little theater; the more it took in, the poorer it grew. They were sure to leave me with an exhausted public, empty benches, and a score or two of affronts to settle among the townsfolk, in consequence of misunderstandings about the taking of places.

But the worst thing I had to undergo in my managerial career was patronage. Oh, sir, of all things deliver me from the patronage of the great people of a country town. It was my ruin. You must know that this town, though small, was filled with feuds and parties, and great folks; being a busy little trading and manufacturing town. The mischief was, that their greatness was of a kind not to be settled by reference to the court calendar, or college of heraldry. It was therefore the most quarrelsome kind of greatness in existence. You smile, sir, but let me tell you there are no feuds more furious than the frontier feuds, which take place on these "debatable lands" of gentility. The most violent dispute that I ever knew in high life was one that occurred at a country town, on a question of precedence between the ladies of a manufacturer of pins and a manufacturer of needles.

At the town where I was situated there were perpetual altercations of the kind. The head manufacturer's lady, for instance, was at daggers drawings with the head shop-keeper's, and both were too rich and had too many friends to be treated lightly. The doctor's and lawyer's ladies held

their heads still higher; but they in their turn were kept in check by the wife of a country banker, who kept her own carriage; while a masculine widow of cracked character and second-hand fashion, who lived in a large house, and was in some way related to nobility, looked down upon them all. She had been exiled from the great world, but here she ruled absolute. To be sure her manners were not over-elegant, nor her fortune over-large; but then, sir, her blood—oh, her blood carried it all hollow; there was no withstanding a woman with such blood in her veins.

After all, she had frequent battles for precedence at balls and assemblies, with some of the sturdy dames of the neighborhood, who stood upon their wealth and their reputations; but then she had two dashing daughters, who dressed as fine as dragons, and had as high blood as their mother, and seconded her in everything. So they carried their point with high heads, and everybody hated, abused, and stood in awe of the Fantadlins.

Such was the state of the fashionable world in this self-important little town. Unluckily I was not as well acquainted with its politics as I should have been. I had found myself a stranger and in great perplexities during my first season; I determined, therefore, to put myself under the patronage of some powerful name, and thus to take the field with the prejudices of the public in my favor. I cast round my thoughts for the purpose, and in an evil hour they fell upon Mrs. Fantadlin. No one seemed to me to have a more absolute sway in the world of fashion. I had always noticed that her party slammed the box door the loudest at the theater; had most beaux attending on them; and talked and laughed loudest during the performance; and then the Miss Fantadlins wore always more feathers and flowers than any other ladies; and used quizzing glasses incessantly. The first evening of my theater's reopening, therefore, was announced in flaring capitals on the play bills, "under the patronage of the Honorable Mrs. Fantadlin."

Sir, the whole community flew to arms! The banker's wife felt her dignity grievously insulted at not having the preference; her husband being high bailiff, and the richest man in the place. She immediately issued invitations for a large party, for the night of the performance, and asked many a lady to it whom she never had noticed before. The fashionable world had long groaned under the tyranny of the Fantadlins, and were glad to make a common cause against this new instance of assumption.—Presume to patronize the theater! insufferable! Those, too, who had never before been noticed by the banker's lady were ready to enlist in any quarrel, for the honor of her acquaintance. All minor feuds were therefore forgotten. The doctor's lady and the lawyer's lady met together; and the manufacturer's lady and the shopkeeper's lady kissed each other; and all, headed by the banker's lady, voted the theater a *bore*, and determined to encourage nothing but the Indian Jugglers, and Mr. Walker's Eidonianeeon.

Alas for poor Pillgarlick! I little knew the mischief that was brewing against me. My box book remained blank. The evening arrived, but no audience. The music struck up to a tolerable pit and gallery, but no fashionables! I peeped anxiously from behind the curtain, but the time passed away; the play was retarded until pit and gallery became furious; and I had to raise the curtain, and play my greatest part in tragedy to "a beggarly account of empty boxes."

It is true the Fantadlins came late, as was their custom, and entered like a tempest, with a flutter of feathers and red shawls; but they were evidently disconcerted at finding they had no one to admire and envy them, and were enraged at this glaring defection of their fashionable followers. All the beaumonde were engaged at the banker's lady's rout. They remained for some time in solitary and uncomfortable state, and though they had the theater almost to themselves, yet, for the first time, they talked in whispers. They left the house at the end of the first piece, and I never saw them afterward.

Such was the rock on which I split. I never got over the patronage of the Fantadlin family. It became the vogue to abuse the theater and declare the performers shocking. An equestrian troupe opened a circus in the town about the same time, and rose on my ruins. My house was deserted; my actors grew discontented because they were ill paid; my door became a hammering-place for every bailiff in the county; and my wife became more and more shrewish and tormenting the more I wanted comfort.

The establishment now became a scene of confusion and speculation. I was considered a ruined man, and of course fair game for every one to pluck at, as every one plunders a sinking ship. Day after day some of the troupe deserted, and, like deserting soldiers, carried off their arms and accouterments with them. In this manner my wardrobe took legs and walked away; my finery strolled all over the country; my swords and daggers glittered in every barn; until at last my tailor made "one fell swoop," and carried off three dress coats, half a dozen doublets, and nineteen pair of flesh-colored pantaloons.

This was the "be all and the end all" of my fortune. I no longer hesitated what to do. Egad, thought I, since stealing is the order of the day, I'll steal too. So I secretly gathered together the jewels of my wardrobe; packed up a hero's dress in a handkerchief, slung it on the end of a tragedy sword, and quietly stole off at dead of night—"the bell then beating one"—leaving my queen and kingdom to the mercy of my rebellious subjects, and my merciless foes, the bum-bailiffs.

Such, sir, was the "end of all my greatness." I was heartily cured of all passion for governing, and returned once more into the ranks. I had for some time the usual run of an actor's life. I played in various country theaters, at fairs, and in barns; sometimes hard pushed, sometimes flush, until on one occasion I came within an ace of making my fortune, and becoming one of the wonders of the age.

I was playing the part of Richard the Third in a country

barn, and absolutely "out-Heroding Herod." An agent of one of the great London theaters was present. He was on the lookout for something that might be got up as a prodigy. The theater, it seems, was in desperate condition—nothing but a miracle could save it. He pitched upon me for that miracle. I had a remarkable bluster in my style and swagger in my gait, and having taken to drink a little during my troubles, my voice was somewhat cracked; so that it seemed like two voices run into one. The thought struck the agent to bring me out as a theatrical wonder; as the restorer of natural and legitimate acting; as the only one who could understand and act Shakespeare rightly. He waited upon me the next morning and opened his plan. I shrunk from it with becoming modesty; for well as I thought of myself, I felt myself unworthy of such praise.

"'Sblood, man!" said he, "no praise at all. You don't imagine that I think you all this. I only want the public to think so. Nothing so easy as gulling the public if you only set up a prodigy. You need not try to act well, you must only act furiously. No matter what you do, or how you act, so that it be but odd and strange. We will have all the pit packed, and the newspapers hired. Whatever you do different from famous actors it shall be insisted that you are right and they were wrong. If you rant, it shall be pure passion; if you are vulgar, it shall be a touch of nature. Every one shall be prepared to fall into raptures, and shout and yell, at certain points which you shall make. If you do but escape pelting the first night, your fortune and the fortune of the theater is made."

I set off for London, therefore, full of new hopes. I was to be the restorer of Shakespeare and nature, and the legitimate drama; my very swagger was to be heroic, and my cracked voice the standard of elocution. Alas, sir! my usual luck attended me. Before I arrived in the metropolis a rival wonder had appeared. A woman who could dance the slack rope, and run up a cord from the stage to the gallery with fireworks all round her. She was seized on by the manage-

ment with avidity; she was the saving of the great national theater for the season. Nothing was talked of but Madame Saqui's fireworks and flame-colored pantaloons; and nature, Shakespeare, the legitimate drama, and poor Pillgarlick were completely left in the lurch.

However, as the manager was in honor bound to provide for me, he kept his word. It had been a turn up of a die whether I should be Alexander the Great or Alexander the coppersmith: the latter carried it. I could not be put at the head of the drama, so I was put at the tail. In other words, I was enrolled among the number of what are called *useful men*; who, let me tell you, are the only comfortable actors on the stage. We are safe from hisses and below the hope of applause. We fear not the success of rivals, nor dread the critic's pen. So long as we get the words of our parts, and they are not often many, it is all we care for. We have our own merriment, our own friends, and our own admirers; for every actor has his friends and admirers, from the highest to the lowest. The first-rate actor dines with the noble amateur, and entertains a fashionable table with scraps and songs and theatrical slip-slop. The second-rate actors have their second-rate friends and admirers, with whom they likewise spout tragedy and talk slip-slop; and so down even to us; who have our friends and admirers among spruce clerks and aspiring apprentices, who treat us to a dinner now and then, and enjoy at tenth hand the same scraps and songs and slip-slop that have been served up by our more fortunate brethren at the tables of the great.

I now, for the first time in my theatrical life, knew what true pleasure is. I have known enough of notoriety to pity the poor devils who are called favorites of the public. I would rather be a kitten in the arms of a spoiled child, to be one moment petted and pampered, and the next moment thumped over the head with the spoon. I smile, too, to see our leading actors fretting themselves with envy and jealousy about a trumpery renown, questionable in its quality and uncertain in its duration. I laugh, too, though of course

in my sleeve, at the bustle and importance and trouble and perplexities of our manager, who is harassing himself to death in the hopeless effort to please everybody.

I have found among my fellow-subalterns two or three quondam managers, who, like myself, have wielded the scepters of country theaters; and we have many a sly joke together at the expense of the manager and the public. Sometimes, too, we meet like deposed and exiled kings; talk over the events of our respective reigns; moralize over a tankard of ale, and laugh at the humbug of the great and little world; which, I take it, is the very essence of practical philosophy.

Thus end the anecdotes of Buckthorne and his friends. A few mornings after our hearing the history of the ex-manager he bounced into my room before I was out of bed.

"Give me joy! give me joy!" said he, rubbing his hands with the utmost glee, "my great expectations are realized!"

I stared at him with a look of wonder and inquiry.

"My booby cousin is dead!" cried he; "may he rest in peace! He nearly broke his neck in a fall from his horse in a fox-chase. By good luck he lived long enough to make his will. He has made me his heir, partly out of an odd feeling of retributive justice, and partly because, as he says, none of his own family or friends knew how to enjoy such an estate. I'm off to the country to take possession. I've done with authorship.—That for the critics!" said he, snapping his fingers. "Come down to Doubting Castle when I get settled, and, egad! I'll give you a rouse." So saying, he shook me heartily by the hand and bounded off in high spirits.

A long time elapsed before I heard from him again. Indeed, it was but a short time since that I received a letter written in the happiest of moods. He was getting the estate into fine order, everything went to his wishes, and, what was more, he was married to Sacharissa; who, it seems, had always entertained an ardent though secret attachment for him, which he fortunately discovered just after coming to his estate.

"I find," said he, "you are a little given to the sin of authorship, which I renounce. If the anecdotes I have given you of my story are of any interest you may make use of them; but come down to Doubting Castle and see how we live, and I'll give you my whole London life over a social glass; and a rattling history it shall be about authors and reviews."

If ever I visit Doubting Castle, and get the history he promises, the public shall be sure to hear of it.

PART THIRD

THE ITALIAN BANDITTI

THE INN AT TERRACINA

CRACK! crack! crack! crack! crack!

"Here comes the estafette from Naples," said mine host of the inn at Terracina, "bring out the relay."

The estafette came as usual galloping up the road, brandishing over his head a short-handled whip, with a long knotted lash; every smack of which made a report like a pistol. He was a tight square-set young fellow, in the customary uniform—a smart blue coat, ornamented with facings and gold lace, but so short behind as to reach scarcely below his waistband, and cocked up not unlike the tail of a wren. A cocked hat, edged with gold lace; a pair of stiff riding boots; but instead of the usual leathern breeches he had a fragment of a pair of drawers that scarcely furnished an apology for modesty to hide behind.

The estafette galloped up to the door and jumped from his horse.

"A glass of rosolio, a fresh horse, and a pair of breeches,"

said he, "and quickly—I am behind my time, and must be off."

"San Genaro!" replied the host, "why, where hast thou left thy garment?"

"Among the robbers between this and Fondi."

"What! rob an estafette! I never heard of such folly. What could they hope to get from thee?"

"My leather breeches!" replied the estafette. "They were brand-new, and shone like gold, and hit the fancy of the captain."

"Well, these fellows grow worse and worse. To meddle with an estafette! And that merely for the sake of a pair of leather breeches!"

The robbing of a government messenger seemed to strike the host with more astonishment than any other enormity that had taken place on the road; and indeed it was the first time so wanton an outrage had been committed; the robbers generally taking care not to meddle with anything belonging to government.

The estafette was by this time equipped; for he had not lost an instant in making his preparations while talking. The relay was ready; the rosolio tossed off. He grasped the reins and the stirrup.

"Were there many robbers in the band?" said a handsome, dark young man, stepping forward from the door of the inn.

"As formidable a band as ever I saw," said the estafette, springing into the saddle.

"Are they cruel to travelers?" said a beautiful young Venetian lady, who had been hanging on the gentleman's arm.

"Cruel, signora!" echoed the estafette, giving a glance at the lady as he put spurs to his horse. "*Corpo del Bacco!* they stiletto all the men, and as to the women—"

Crack! crack! crack! crack! crack!—the last words were drowned in the smacking of the whip, and away galloped the estafette along the road to the Pontine marshes.

"Holy Virgin!" ejaculated the fair Venetian, "what will become of us!"

The inn of Terracina stands just outside of the walls of the old town of that name, on the frontiers of the Roman territory. A little, lazy Italian town, the inhabitants of which, apparently heedless and listless, are said to be little better than the brigands which surround them, and indeed are half of them supposed to be in some way or other connected with the robbers. A vast, rocky height rises perpendicularly above it, with the ruins of the castle of Theodoric the Goth crowning its summit; before it spreads the wide bosom of the Mediterranean, that sea without flux or reflux. There seems an idle pause in everything about this place. The port is without a sail, excepting that once in a while a solitary felucca may be seen disgorging its holy cargo of baccala, the meager provision for the Quaresima or Lent. The naked watch towers, rising here and there along the coast, speak of pirates and corsairs which hover about these shores; while the low huts, as stations for soldiers, which dot the distant road, as it winds through an olive grove, intimate that in the ascent there is danger for the traveler and facility for the bandit.

Indeed, it is between this town and Fondi that the road to Naples is mostly infested by banditti. It winds among rocky and solitary places, where the robbers are enabled to see the traveler from a distance, from the brows of hills or impending precipices, and to lie in wait for him at the lonely and difficult passes.

At the time that the estafette made this sudden appearance, almost in *cuero*, the audacity of the robbers had risen to an unparalleled height. They had their spies and emissaries in every town, village, and osteria, to give them notice of the quality and movements of travelers. They did not scruple to send messages into the country towns and villas, demanding certain sums of money, or articles of dress and luxury; with menaces of vengeance in case of refusal. They had plundered carriages; carried people of rank and fortune into the mountains, and obliged them to write for heavy ran-

soms; and had committed outrages on females who had fallen in their power.

The police exerted its rigor in vain. The brigands were too numerous and powerful for a weak police. They were countenanced and cherished by several of the villages; and though now and then the limbs of malefactors hung blackening in the trees near which they had committed some atrocity, or their heads stuck upon posts in iron cages made some dreary part of the road still more dreary, still they seemed to strike dismay into no bosom but that of the traveler.

The dark, handsome young man and the Venetian lady whom I have mentioned had arrived early that afternoon in a private carriage, drawn by mules and attended by a single servant. They had been recently married, were spending the honeymoon in traveling through these delicious countries, and were on their way to visit a rich aunt of the young lady's at Naples.

The lady was young and tender and timid. The stories she had heard along the road had filled her with apprehension, no more for herself than for her husband; for though she had been married almost a month, she still loved him almost to idolatry. When she reached Terracina the rumors of the road had increased to an alarming magnitude; and the sight of two robbers' skulls, grinning in iron cages on each side of the old gateway of the town, brought her to a pause. Her husband had tried in vain to reassure her. They had lingered all the afternoon at the inn, until it was too late to think of starting that evening, and the parting words of the estafette completed her affright.

"Let us return to Rome," said she, putting her arm within her husband's and drawing toward him as if for protection—"let us return to Rome and give up this visit to Naples."

"And give up the visit to your aunt, too," said the husband.

"Nay—what is my aunt in comparison with your safety?" said she, looking up tenderly in his face.

There was something in her tone and manner that showed she really was thinking more of her husband's safety at that moment than of her own; and being recently married, and a match of pure affection, too, it is very possible that she was. At least her husband thought so. Indeed, any one who has heard the sweet, musical tone of a Venetian voice, and the melting tenderness of a Venetian phrase, and felt the soft witchery of a Venetian eye, would not wonder at the husband's believing whatever they professed.

He clasped the white hand that had been laid within his, put his arm round her slender waist, and drawing her fondly to his bosom—"This night at least," said he, "we'll pass at Terracina."

Crack! crack! crack! crack! crack!

Another apparition of the road attracted the attention of mine host and his guests. From the road across the Pontine marshes a carriage drawn by half a dozen horses came driving at a furious pace—the postilions smacking their whips like mad, as is the case when conscious of the greatness or the munificence of their fare. It was a landaulet, with a servant mounted on the dickey. The compact, highly finished, yet proudly simple construction of the carriage; the quantity of neat, well-arranged trunks and conveniences; the loads of box coats and upper benjamins on the dickey—and the fresh, burly, gruff-looking face at the window, proclaimed at once that it was the equipage of an Englishman.

"Fresh horses to Fondi," said the Englishman, as the landlord came bowing to the carriage door.

"Would not his excellenza alight and take some refreshment?"

"No—he did not mean to eat until he got to Fondi!"

"But the horses will be some time in getting ready—"

"Ah—that's always the case—nothing but delay in this cursed country."

"If his excellenza would only walk into the house—"

"No, no, no!—I tell you no!—I want nothing but horses, and as quick as possible. John! see that the horses are got

ready, and don't let us be kept here an hour or two. Tell him if we're delayed over the time, I'll lodge a complaint with the postmaster."

John touched his hat, and set off to obey his master's orders, with the taciturn obedience of an English servant. He was a ruddy, round-faced fellow, with hair cropped close; a short coat, drab breeches, and long gaiters; and appeared to have almost as much contempt as his master for everything around him.

In the meantime the Englishman got out of the carriage and walked up and down before the inn, with his hands in his pockets: taking no notice of the crowd of idlers who were gazing at him and his equipage. He was tall, stout, and well made; dressed with neatness and precision, wore a traveling-cap of the color of gingerbread, and had rather an unhappy expression about the corners of his mouth; partly from not having yet made his dinner, and partly from not having been able to get on at a greater rate than seven miles an hour. Not that he had any other cause for haste than an Englishman's usual hurry to get to the end of a journey; or, to use the regular phrase, "to get on."

After some time the servant returned from the stable with as sour a look as his master.

"Are the horses ready, John?"

"No, sir—I never saw such a place. There's no getting anything done. I think your honor had better step into the house and get something to eat; it will be a long while before we get to Fundy."

"D—n the house—it's a mere trick—I'll not eat anything, just to spite them," said the Englishman, still more crusty at the prospect of being so long without his dinner.

"They say your honor's very wrong," said John, "to set off at this late hour. The road's full of highwaymen."

"Mere tales to get custom."

"The estafette which passed us was stopped by a whole gang," said John, increasing his emphasis with each additional piece of information.

"I don't believe a word of it."

"They robbed him of his breeches," said John, giving at the same time a hitch to his own waistband.

"All humbug!"

Here the dark, handsome young man stepped forward, and addressing the Englishman very politely in broken English, invited him to partake of a repast he was about to make. "Thank'ee," said the Englishman, thrusting his hands deeper into his pockets, and casting a slight side glance of suspicion at the young man, as if he thought from his civility he must have a design upon his purse.

"We shall be most happy if you will do us that favor," said the lady, in her soft Venetian dialect. There was a sweetness in her accents that was most persuasive. The Englishman cast a look upon her countenance; her beauty was still more eloquent. His features instantly relaxed. He made an attempt at a civil bow. "With great pleasure, signora," said he.

In short, the eagerness to "get on" was suddenly slackened; the determination to famish himself as far as Fondi by way of punishing the landlord was abandoned; John chose the best apartment in the inn for his master's reception, and preparations were made to remain there until morning.

The carriage was unpacked of such of its contents as were indispensable for the night. There was the usual parade of trunks, and writing-desks, and portfolios, and dressing-boxes, and those other oppressive conveniences which burden a comfortable man. The observant loiterers about the inn door, wrapped up in great dirt-colored cloaks, with only a hawk's eye uncovered, made many remarks to each other on this quantity of luggage that seemed enough for an army. And the domestics of the inn talked with wonder of the splendid dressing-case, with its gold and silver furniture, that was spread out on the toilet table, and the bag of gold that chinked as it was taken out of the trunk. The strange "Milor's" wealth, and the treas-

ures he carried about him, were the talk, that evening, over all Terracina.

The Englishman took some time to make his ablutions and arrange his dress for table, and after considerable labor and effort in putting himself at his ease, made his appearance, with stiff white cravat, his clothes free from the least speck of dust, and adjusted with precision. He made a formal bow on entering, which no doubt he meant to be cordial, but which any one else would have considered cool, and took his seat.

The supper, as it was termed by the Italian, or dinner, as the Englishman called it, was now served. Heaven and earth, and the waters under the earth, had been moved to furnish it, for there were birds of the air and beasts of the earth and fish of the sea. The Englishman's servant, too, had turned the kitchen topsy-turvy in his zeal to cook his master a beefsteak; and made his appearance loaded with ketchup, and soy, and Cayenne pepper, and Harvey sauce, and a bottle of port wine, from that warehouse, the carriage, in which his master seemed desirous of carrying England about the world with him. Everything, however, according to the Englishman, was execrable. The tureen of soup was a black sea, with livers and limbs and fragments of all kinds of birds and beasts floating like wrecks about it. A meager winged animal, which my host called a delicate chicken, was too delicate for his stomach, for it had evidently died of a consumption. The macaroni was smoked. The beefsteak was tough buffalo's flesh, and the countenance of mine host confirmed the assertion. Nothing seemed to hit his palate but a dish of stewed eels, of which he ate with great relish, but had nearly refunded them when told that they were vipers, caught among the rocks of Terracina, and esteemed a great delicacy.

In short, the Englishman ate and growled, and ate and growled, like a cat eating in company, pronouncing himself poisoned by every dish, yet eating on in defiance of death and the doctor. The Venetian lady, not accustomed to En-

glish travelers, almost repented having persuaded him to the meal; for though very gracious to her, he was so crusty to all the world beside that she stood in awe of him. There is nothing, however, that conquers John Bull's crustiness sooner than eating, whatever may be the cookery; and nothing brings him into good humor with his company sooner than eating together; the Englishman, therefore, had not half finished his repast and his bottle, before he began to think the Venetian a very tolerable fellow for a foreigner, and his wife almost handsome enough to be an Englishwoman.

In the course of the repast the tales of robbers which harassed the mind of the fair Venetian were brought into discussion. The landlord and the waiter served up such a number of them as they served up the dishes that they almost frightened away the poor lady's appetite. Among these was the story of the school of Terracina, still fresh in every mind, where the students were carried up the mountains by the banditti, in hopes of ransom, and one of them massacred, to bring the parents to terms for the others. There was a story also of a gentleman of Rome, who delayed remitting the ransom demanded for his son, detained by the banditti, and received one of his son's ears in a letter with information that the other would be remitted to him soon, if the money were not forthcoming, and that in this way he would receive the boy by installments until he came to terms.

The fair Venetian shuddered as she heard these tales. The landlord, like a true story-teller, doubled the dose when he saw how it operated. He was just proceeding to relate the misfortunes of a great English lord and his family, when the Englishman, tired of his volubility, testily interrupted him, and pronounced these accounts mere traveler's tales, or the exaggerations of peasants and innkeepers. The landlord was indignant at the doubt leveled at his stories, and the innuendo leveled at his cloth; he cited half a dozen stories still more terrible, to corroborate those he had already told.

"I don't believe a word of them," said the Englishman.

"But the robbers had been tried and executed."

"All a farce!"

"But their heads were stuck up along the road."

"Old skulls accumulated during a century."

The landlord muttered to himself as he went out at the door, "San Genaro, come sono singolari questi Inglesi."

A fresh hubbub outside of the inn announced the arrival of more travelers; and from the variety of voices, or rather clamors, the clattering of horses' hoofs, the rattling of wheels, and the general uproar both within and without, the arrival seemed to be numerous. It was, in fact, the *procaccio* and its convoy—a kind of caravan of merchandise that sets out on stated days under an escort of soldiery to protect it from the robbers. Travelers avail themselves of the occasion, and many carriages accompany the *procaccio*. It was a long time before either landlord or waiter returned, being hurried away by the tempest of new custom. When mine host appeared, there was a smile of triumph on his countenance.—"Perhaps," said he, as he cleared away the table, "perhaps the signor has not heard of what has happened."

"What?" said the Englishman, dryly.

"Oh, the *procaccio* has arrived, and has brought accounts of fresh exploits of the robbers, signor."

"Pish!"

"There's more news of the English Milor and his family," said the host, emphatically.

"An English lord.—What English lord?"

"Milor Popkin."

"Lord Popkin? I never heard of such a title!"

"*O Sicuro*—a great nobleman that passed through here lately with his milady and daughters—a magnifico—one of the grand councilors of London—un almanno."

"Almanno—almanno?—tut! he means alderman."

"*Sicuro*, aldermanno Popkin, and the principessa Popkin, and the signorina Popkin!" said mine host, triumphantly. He would now have entered into a full detail, but was thwarted by the Englishman, who seemed determined not to credit or indulge him in his stories. An Italian tongue,

however, is not easily checked: that of mine host continued to run on with increasing volubility as he conveyed the fragments of the repast out of the room, and the last that could be distinguished of his voice, as it died away along the corridor, was the constant recurrence of the favorite word Popkin—Popkin—Popkin—pop—pop—pop.

The arrival of the procaccio had indeed filled the house with stories as it had with guests. The Englishman and his companions walked out after supper into the great hall or common room of the inn, which runs through the center building; a gloomy, dirty-looking apartment, with tables placed in various parts of it, at which some of the travelers were seated in groups, while others strolled about in famished impatience for their evening's meal. As the procaccio was a kind of caravan of travelers, there were people of every class and country, who had come in all kinds of vehicles; and though they kept in some measure in separate parties, yet the being united under one common escort had jumbled them into companionship on the road. Their formidable number and the formidable guard that accompanied them had prevented any molestation from the banditti; but every carriage had its tale of wonder, and one vied with another in the recital. Not one but had seen groups of robbers peering over the rocks; or their guns peeping out from among the bushes, or had been reconnoitered by some suspicious-looking fellow with scowling eye, who disappeared on seeing the guard.

The fair Venetian listened to all these stories with that eager curiosity with which we seek to pamper any feeling of alarm. Even the Englishman began to feel interested in the subject, and desirous of gaining more correct information than these mere flying reports. He mingled in one of the groups which appeared to be the most respectable, and which was assembled round a tall, thin person, with long Roman nose, a high forehead, and lively prominent eye, beaming from under a green velvet traveling-cap with gold tassel. He was holding forth with all the fluency of a man who talks

well and likes to exert his talent. He was of Rome; a surgeon by profession, a poet by choice, and one who was something of an improvvisatore. He soon gave the Englishman abundance of information respecting the banditti. "The fact is," said he, "that many of the people in the villages among the mountains are robbers, or rather the robbers find perfect asylum among them. They range over a vast extent of wild impracticable country, along the chain of Apennines, bordering on different states; they know all the difficult passes, the short cuts and strongholds. They are secure of the good-will of the poor and peaceful inhabitants of those regions, whom they never disturb, and whom they often enrich. Indeed, they are looked upon as a sort of illegitimate heroes among the mountain villages, and some of the frontier towns, where they dispose of their plunder. From these mountains they keep a lookout upon the plains and valleys, and meditate their descents.

"The road to Fondi, which you are about to travel, is one of the places most noted for their exploits. It is overlooked from some distance by little hamlets, perched upon heights. From hence, the brigands, like hawks in their nests, keep on the watch for such travelers as are likely to afford either booty or ransom. The windings of the road enable them to see carriages long before they pass, so that they have time to get to some advantageous lurking-place from whence to pounce upon their prey."

"But why does not the police interfere and root them out?" said the Englishman.

"The police is too weak and the banditti are too strong," replied the improvvisatore. "To root them out would be a more difficult task than you imagine. They are connected and identified with the people of the villages and the peasantry generally; the numerous bands have an understanding with each other, and with people of various conditions in all parts of the country. They know all that is going on; a *gens d'armes* cannot stir without their being aware of it. They have their spies and emissaries in every direction; they

lurk about towns, villages, inns—mingle in every crowd, pervade every place of resort. I should not be surprised,” said he, “if some one should be supervising us at this moment.”

The fair Venetian looked round fearfully and turned pale.

“One peculiarity of the Italian banditti,” continued the improvvisatore, “is that they wear a kind of uniform, or rather costume, which designates their profession. This is probably done to take away from its skulking lawless character, and to give it something of a military air in the eyes of the common people; or perhaps to catch by outward dash and show the fancies of the young men of the villages. These dresses or costumes are often rich and fanciful. Some wear jackets and breeches of bright colors, richly embroidered; broad belts of cloth; or sashes of silk net; broad, high-crowned hats, decorated with feathers or variously-colored ribbons, and silk nets for the hair.

“Many of the robbers are peasants who follow ordinary occupations in the villages for a part of the year, and take to the mountains for the rest. Some only go out for a season, as it were, on a hunting expedition, and then resume the dress and habits of common life. Many of the young men of the villages take to this kind of life occasionally from a mere love of adventure, the wild wandering spirit of youth and the contagion of bad example; but it is remarked that they can never after brook a long continuance in settled life. They get fond of the unbounded freedom and rude license they enjoy; and there is something in this wild mountain life checkered by adventure and peril that is wonderfully fascinating, independent of the gratification of cupidity by the plunder of the wealthy traveler.”

Here the improvvisatore was interrupted by a lively Neapolitan lawyer. “Your mention of the younger robbers,” said he, “puts me in mind of an adventure of a learned doctor, a friend of mine, which happened in this very neighborhood.”

A wish was of course expressed to hear the adventure of



THE LITTLE ANTIQUARY AND HIS HOSTS.

Irving, Vol. Two, p. 447.

the doctor by all except the improvvisatore, who, being fond of talking and of hearing himself talk, and accustomed moreover to harangue without interruption, looked rather annoyed at being checked when in full career.

The Neapolitan, however, took no notice of his chagrin, but related the following anecdote.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE LITTLE ANTIQUARY

My friend the doctor was a thorough antiquary: a little, rusty, musty old fellow, always groping among ruins. He relished a building as you Englishmen relish a cheese, the more mouldy and crumbling it was the more it was to his taste. A shell of an old nameless temple, or the cracked walls of a broken-down amphitheater, would throw him into raptures; and he took more delight in these crusts and cheese parings of antiquity than in the best-conditioned modern edifice.

He had taken a maggot into his brain at one time to hunt after the ancient cities of the Pelasgi which are said to exist to this day among the mountains of the Abruzzi; but the condition of which is strangely unknown to antiquaries. It is said that he had made a great many valuable notes and memorandums on the subject, which he always carried about with him, either for the purpose of frequent reference, or because he feared the precious documents might fall into the hands of brother antiquaries. He had therefore a large pocket behind, in which he carried them, banging against his rear as he walked.

Be this as it may; happening to pass a few days at Terracina, in the course of his researches, he one day mounted the rocky cliffs which overhang the town to visit the castle of Theodoric. He was groping about these ruins, toward the hour of sunset, buried in his reflections—his wits no doubt

wool-gathering among the Goths and Romans—when he heard footsteps behind him.

He turned and beheld five or six young fellows, of rough, saucy demeanor, clad in a singular manner, half peasant, half huntsman, with fusils in their hands. Their whole appearance and carriage left him in no doubt into what company he had fallen.

The doctor was a feeble little man, poor in look and poorer in purse. He had but little money in his pocket; but he had certain valuables, such as an old silver watch, thick as a turnip, with figures on it large enough for a clock, and a set of seals at the end of a steel chain, that dangled half down to his knees; all which were of precious esteem, being family relics. He had also a seal ring, a veritable antique intaglio, that covered half his knuckles; but what he most valued was the precious treatise on the Pelasgian cities, which he would gladly have given all the money in his pocket to have had safe at the bottom of his trunk in Terracina.

However, he plucked up a stout heart; at least as stout a heart as he could, seeing that he was but a puny little man at the best of times. So he wished the hunters a “*buon giorno*.” They returned his salutation, giving the old gentleman a sociable slap on the back that made his heart leap into his throat.

They fell into conversation, and walked for some time together among the heights, the doctor wishing them all the while at the bottom of the crater of Vesuvius. At length they came to a small osteria on the mountain, where they proposed to enter and have a cup of wine together. The doctor consented; though he would as soon have been invited to drink hemlock.

One of the gang remained sentinel at the door; the others swaggered into the house; stood their fusils in a corner of the room; and each drawing a pistol or stiletto out of his belt, laid it, with some emphasis, on the table. They now called lustily for wine; drew benches round the table, and hailing the doctor as though he had been a boon companion

of long standing, insisted upon his sitting down and making merry. He complied with forced grimace, but with fear and trembling; sitting on the edge of his bench; supping down heartburn with every drop of liquor; eying ruefully the black muzzled pistols, and cold, naked stilettos. They pushed the bottle bravely, and plied him vigorously; sang, laughed, told excellent stories of robberies and combats, and the little doctor was fain to laugh at these cut-throat pleasantries, though his heart was dying away at the very bottom of his bosom.

By their own account they were young men from the villages, who had recently taken up this line of life in the mere wild caprice of youth. They talked of their exploits as a sportsman talks of his amusements. To shoot down a traveler seemed of little more consequence to them than to shoot a hare. They spoke with rapture of the glorious roving life they led; free as birds; here to-day, gone to-morrow; ranging the forests, climbing the rocks, scouring the valleys, the world their own wherever they could lay hold of it; full purses, merry companions; pretty women.—The little antiquary got fuddled with their talk and their wine, for they did not spare bumpers. He half forgot his fears, his seal ring, and his family watch; even the treatise on the Pelasgian cities which was warming under him, for a time faded from his memory, in the glowing picture which they drew. He declares that he no longer wonders at the prevalence of this robber mania among the mountains; for he felt at the time that, had he been a young man and a strong man, and had there been no danger of the galleys in the background, he should have been half tempted himself to turn bandit.

At length the fearful hour of separating arrived. The doctor was suddenly called to himself and his fears by seeing the robbers resume their weapons. He now quaked for his valuables, and above all for his antiquarian treatise. He endeavored, however, to look cool and unconcerned; and drew from out of his deep pocket a long, lank, leathern purse,

far gone in consumption, at the bottom of which a few coin chinked with the trembling of his hand.

The chief of the party observed his movement; and laying his hand upon the antiquary's shoulder—"Harkee! Signor Dottore!" said he, "we have drank together as friends and comrades, let us part as such. We understand you; we know who and what you are; for we know who everybody is that sleeps at Terracina, or that puts foot upon the road. You are a rich man, but you carry all your wealth in your head. We can't get at it, and we should not know what to do with it if we could. I see you are uneasy about your ring; but don't worry your mind; it is not worth taking; you think it an antique, but it's a counterfeit—a mere sham."

Here the doctor would have put in a word, for his antiquarian pride was touched.

"Nay, nay," continued the other, "we've no time to dispute about it. Value it as you please. Come, you are a brave little old signor—one more cup of wine and we'll pay the reckoning. No compliments—I insist on it. So—now make the best of your way back to Terracina; it's growing late—buono viaggio!—and hark'ee, take care how you wander among these mountains."

They shouldered their fusils, sprang gayly up the rocks, and the little doctor hobbled back to Terracina, rejoicing that the robbers had let his seal ring, his watch, and his treatise escape unmolested, though rather nettled that they should have pronounced his veritable intaglio a counterfeit.

The improvvisatore had shown many symptoms of impatience during this recital. He saw his theme in danger of being taken out of his hands by a rival story-teller, which to an able talker is always a serious grievance; it was also in danger of being taken away by a Neapolitan, and that was still more vexatious; as the members of the different Italian states have an incessant jealousy of each other in all things, great and small. He took advantage of the first pause of

the Neapolitan to catch hold again of the thread of the conversation.

"As I was saying," resumed he, "the prevalence of these banditti is so extensive; their power so combined and interwoven with other ranks of society—"

"For that matter," said the Neapolitan, "I have heard that your government has had some understanding with these gentry, or at least winked at them."

"My government?" said the Roman, impatiently.

"Ay—they say that Cardinal Gonsalvi—"

"Hush!" said the Roman, holding up his finger, and rolling his large eyes about the room.

"Nay—I only repeat what I heard commonly rumored in Rome," replied the other, sturdily. "It was whispered that the cardinal had been up to the mountain, and had an interview with some of the chiefs. And I have been told that when honest people have been kicking their heels in the cardinal's ante-chamber, waiting by the hour for admittance, one of these stiletto-looking fellows has elbowed his way through the crowd, and entered without ceremony into the cardinal's presence."

"I know," replied the Roman, "that there have been such reports, and it is not impossible that government may have made use of these men at particular periods, such as at the time of your abortive revolution, when your carbonari were so busy with their machinations all over the country. The information that men like these could collect, who were familiar, not merely with all the recesses and secret places of the mountains, but also with all the dark and dangerous recesses of society, and knew all that was plotting in the world of mischief; the utility of such instruments in the hands of government was too obvious to be overlooked, and Cardinal Gonsalvi, as a politic statesman, may, perhaps, have made use of them; for it is well known the robbers, with all their atrocities, are respectful toward the church, and devout in their religion."

"Religion!—religion?" echoed the Englishman.

"Yes—religion!" repeated the improvvisatore. "Scarce one of them but will cross himself and say his prayers when he hears in his mountain fastness the *matin* or the *ave maria* bells sounding from the valleys. They will often confess themselves to the village priests, to obtain absolution; and occasionally visit the village churches to pray at some favorite shrine. I recollect an instance in point: I was one evening in the village of Frescati, which lies below the mountains of Abruzzi. The people, as usual in fine evenings in our Italian towns and villages, were standing about in groups in the public square, conversing and amusing themselves. I observed a tall, muscular fellow, wrapped in a great mantle, passing across the square, but skulking along in the dark, as if avoiding notice. The people, too, seemed to draw back as he passed. It was whispered to me that he was a notorious bandit."

"But why was he not immediately seized?" said the Englishman.

"Because it was nobody's business; because nobody wished to incur the vengeance of his comrades; because there were not sufficient *gens d'armes* near to insure security against the numbers of desperadoes he might have at hand; because the *gens d'armes* might not have received particular instructions with respect to him, and might not feel disposed to engage in the hazardous conflict without compulsion. In short, I might give you a thousand reasons, rising out of the state of our government and manners, not one of which after all might appear satisfactory."

The Englishman shrugged his shoulders with an air of contempt.

"I have been told," added the Roman, rather quickly, "that even in your metropolis of London, notorious thieves, well known to the police as such, walk the streets at noon-day, in search of their prey, and are not molested unless caught in the very act of robbery."

The Englishman gave another shrug, but with a different expression.

“Well, sir, I fixed my eye on this daring wolf thus prowling through the fold, and saw him enter a church. I was curious to witness his devotions. You know our spacious, magnificent churches. The one in which he entered was vast and shrouded in the dusk of evening. At the extremity of the long aisles a couple of tapers feebly glimmered on the grand altar. In one of the side chapels was a votive candle placed before the image of a saint. Before this image the robber had prostrated himself. His mantle, partly falling off from his shoulders as he knelt, revealed a form of herculean strength; a stiletto and pistol glittered in his belt, and the light falling on his countenance showed features not unhandsome, but strongly and fiercely characterized. As he prayed he became vehemently agitated; his lips quivered; sighs and murmurs, almost groans, burst from him; he beat his breast with violence, then clasped his hands and wrung them convulsively as he extended them toward the image. Never had I seen such a terrific picture of remorse. I felt fearful of being discovered by him, and withdrew. Shortly after I saw him issue from the church wrapped in his mantle; he recrossed the square, and no doubt returned to his mountain with disburdened conscience, ready to incur a fresh arrear of crime.”

The conversation was here taken up by two other travelers, recently arrived, Mr. Hobbs and Mr. Dobbs, a linen-draper and a green-grocer, just returning from a tour in Greece and the Holy Land: and who were full of the story of Alderman Popkins. They were astonished that the robbers should dare to molest a man of his importance on 'change; he being an eminent dry-salter of Throgmorton Street, and a magistrate to boot.

In fact, the story of the Popkins family was but too true; it was attested by too many present to be for a moment doubted; and from the contradictory and concordant testimony of half a score, all eager to relate it, the company were enabled to make out all the particulars.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE POPKINS FAMILY

It was but a few days before that the carriage of Alderman Popkins had driven up to the inn of Terracina. Those who have seen an English family carriage on the Continent must know the sensation it produces. It is an epitome of England; a little morsel of the old island rolling about the world—everything so compact, so snug, so finished and fitting. The wheels that roll on patent axles without rattling; the body that hangs so well on its springs, yielding to every motion, yet proof against every shock. The ruddy faces gaping out of the windows; sometimes of a portly old citizen, sometimes of a voluminous dowager, and sometimes of a fine fresh hoyden, just from boarding school. And then the dickeys loaded with well-dressed servants, beef-fed and bluff; looking down from their heights with contempt on all the world around; profoundly ignorant of the country and the people, and devoutly certain that everything not English must be wrong.

Such was the carriage of Alderman Popkins, as it made its appearance at Terracina. The courier who had preceded it to order horses, and who was a Neapolitan, had given a magnificent account of the riches and greatness of his master, blundering, with all an Italian's splendor of imagination, about the alderman's titles and dignities; the host had added his usual share of exaggeration, so that by the time the alderman drove up to the door he was Milor—Magnifico—Principe—the Lord knows what!

The alderman was advised to take an escort to Fondi and Itri, but he refused. It was as much as a man's life was worth, he said, to stop him on the king's highway; he would complain of it to the ambassador at Naples; he would make

a national affair of it. The principessa Popkins, a fresh, motherly dame, seemed perfectly secure in the protection of her husband, so omnipotent a man in the city. The signorini Popkins, two fine bouncing girls, looked to their brother Tom, who had taken lessons in boxing; and as to the dandy himself, he was sure no scaramouch of an Italian robber would dare to meddle with an Englishman. The landlord shrugged his shoulders and turned out the palms of his hands with a true Italian grimace, and the carriage of Milor Popkins rolled on.

They passed through several very suspicious places without any molestation. The Misses Popkins, who were very romantic, and had learned to draw in water colors, were enchanted with the savage scenery around; it was so like what they had read in Mrs. Radcliffe's romances, they should like of all things to make sketches. At length, the carriage arrived at a place where the road wound up a long hill. Mrs. Popkins had sunk into a sleep; the young ladies were reading the last works of Sir Walter Scott and Lord Byron, and the dandy was hectoring the postilions from the coach box. The alderman got out, as he said, to stretch his legs up the hill. It was a long winding ascent, and obliged him every now and then to stop and blow and wipe his forehead with many a pish! and phew! being rather pursy and short of wind. As the carriage, however, was far behind him, and toiling slowly under the weight of so many well-stuffed trunks and well-stuffed travelers, he had plenty of time to walk at leisure.

On a jutting point of rock that overhung the road nearly at the summit of the hill, just where the route began again to descend, he saw a solitary man seated, who appeared to be tending goats. Alderman Popkins was one of your shrewd travelers that always like to be picking up small information along the road, so he thought he'd just scramble up to the honest man, and have a little talk with him by way of learning the news and getting a lesson in Italian. As he drew near to the peasant he did not half like his looks.

He was partly reclining on the rocks wrapped in the usual long mantle, which, with his slouched hat, only left a part of a swarthy visage, with a keen black eye, a beetle brow, and a fierce mustache to be seen. He had whistled several times to his dog which was roving about the side of the hill. As the alderman approached he rose and greeted him. When standing erect he seemed almost gigantic, at least in the eyes of Alderman Popkins; who, however, being a short man, might be deceived.

The latter would gladly now have been back in the carriage, or even on 'change in London, for he was by no means well pleased with his company. However, he determined to put the best face on matters, and was beginning a conversation about the state of the weather, the baddishness of the crops, and the price of goats in that part of the country, when he heard a violent screaming. He ran to the edge of the rock, and, looking over, saw away down the road his carriage surrounded by robbers. One held down the fat footman, another had the dandy by his starched cravat, with a pistol to his head; one was rummaging a portmanteau, another rummaging the princepezza's pockets, while the two Misses Popkins were screaming from each window of the carriage, and their waiting maid squalling from the dickey.

Alderman Popkins felt all the fury of the parent and the magistrate roused within him. He grasped his cane and was on the point of scrambling down the rocks, either to assault the robbers or to read the riot act, when he was suddenly grasped by the arm. It was by his friend the goatherd, whose cloak, falling partly off, discovered a belt stuck full of pistols and stiletos. In short, he found himself in the clutches of the captain of the band, who had stationed himself on the rock to look out for travelers and to give notice to his men.

A sad ransacking took place. Trunks were turned inside out, and all the finery and the frippery of the Popkins family scattered about the road. Such a chaos of Venice beads and Roman mosaics, and Paris bonnets of the young ladies

mingled with the alderman's night-caps and lamb's wool stockings, and the dandy's hair-brushes, stays, and starched cravats.

The gentlemen were eased of their purses and their watches; the ladies of their jewels; and the whole party were on the point of being carried up into the mountain, when fortunately the appearance of soldiery at a distance obliged the robbers to make off with the spoils they had secured, and leave the Popkins family to gather together the remnants of their effects, and make the best of their way to Fondi.

When safe arrived, the alderman made a terrible blustering at the inn; threatened to complain to the ambassador at Naples, and was ready to shake his cane at the whole country. The dandy had many stories to tell of his scuffles with the brigands, who overpowered him merely by numbers. As to the Misses Popkins, they were quite delighted with the adventure, and were occupied the whole evening in writing it in their journals. They declared the captain of the band to be a most romantic-looking man; they dared to say some unfortunate lover, or exiled nobleman: and several of the band to be very handsome young men—"quite picturesque!"

"In verity," said mine host of Terracina, "they say the captain of the band is *un galant uomo*."

"A gallant man!" said the Englishman. "I'd have your gallant man hanged like a dog!"

"To dare to meddle with Englishmen!" said Mr. Hobbs.

"And such a family as the Popkinses!" said Mr. Dobbs.

"They ought to come upon the county for damages!" said Mr. Hobbs.

"Our ambassador should make a complaint to the government of Naples," said Mr. Dobbs.

"They should be requested to drive these rascals out of the country," said Hobbs.

"If they did not, we should declare war against them!" said Dobbs.

The Englishman was a little wearied by this story, and by the ultra zeal of his countrymen, and was glad when a

summons to their supper relieved him from the crowd of travelers. He walked out with his Venetian friends and a young Frenchman of an interesting demeanor, who had become sociable with them in the course of the conversation. They directed their steps toward the sea, which was lighted up by the rising moon. The Venetian, out of politeness, left his beautiful wife to be escorted by the Englishman. The latter, however, either from shyness or reserve, did not avail himself of the civility, but walked on without offering his arm. The fair Venetian, with all her devotion to her husband, was a little nettled at a want of gallantry to which her charms had rendered her unaccustomed, and took the proffered arm of the Frenchman with a pretty air of pique, which, however, was entirely lost upon the phlegmatic delinquent.

Not far distant from the inn they came to where there was a body of soldiers on the beach, encircling and guarding a number of galley slaves, who were permitted to refresh themselves in the evening breeze, and to sport and roll upon the sand.

"It was difficult," the Frenchman observed, "to conceive a more frightful mass of crime than was here collected. The parricide, the fratricide, the infanticide, who had first fled from justice and turned mountain bandit, and then, by betraying his brother desperadoes, had bought a commutation of punishment, and the privilege of wallowing on the shore for an hour a day, with this wretched crew of miscreants!"

The remark of the Frenchman had a strong effect upon the company, particularly upon the Venetian lady, who shuddered as she cast a timid look at this horde of wretches at their evening relaxation. "They seemed," she said, "like so many serpents, wreathing and twisting together."

The Frenchman now adverted to the stories they had been listening to at the inn, adding, that if they had any further curiosity on the subject, he could recount an adventure which happened to himself among the robbers, and which might give them some idea of the habits and manners of those beings. There was an air of modesty and frankness

about the Frenchman which had gained the good-will of the whole party, not even excepting the Englishman. They all gladly accepted his proposition; and as they strolled slowly up and down the seashore, he related the following adventure.

THE PAINTER'S ADVENTURE

I AM a historical painter by profession, and resided for some time in the family of a foreign prince, at his villa, about fifteen miles from Rome, among some of the most interesting scenery of Italy. It is situated on the heights of ancient Tusculum. In its neighborhood are the ruins of the villas of Cicero, Sylla, Lucullus, Rufinus, and other illustrious Romans, who sought refuge here occasionally, from their toils, in the bosom of a soft and luxurious repose. From the midst of delightful bowers, refreshed by the pure mountain breeze, the eye looks over a romantic landscape full of poetical and historical associations. The Albanian mountains, Tivoli, once the favorite residence of Horace and Mæcenas; the vast deserted Campagna with the Tiber running through it, and St. Peter's dome swelling in the midst, the monument, as it were, over the grave of ancient Rome.

I assisted the prince in the researches which he was making among the classic ruins of his vicinity. His exertions were highly successful. Many wrecks of admirable statues and fragments of exquisite sculpture were dug up; monuments of the taste and magnificence that reigned in the ancient Tusculan abodes. He had studded his villa and its grounds with statues, relievos, vases, and sarcophagi, thus retrieved from the bosom of the earth.

The mode of life pursued at the villa was delightfully serene, diversified by interesting occupations and elegant leisure. Every one passed the day according to his pleasure or occupation; and we all assembled in a cheerful dinner party at sunset. It was on the fourth of November, a beau-

tiful serene day, that we had assembled in the saloon at the sound of the first dinner-bell. The family were surprised at the absence of the prince's confessor. They waited for him in vain, and at length placed themselves at table. They first attributed his absence to his having prolonged his customary walk; and the first part of the dinner passed without any uneasiness. When the dessert was served, however, without his making his appearance, they began to feel anxious. They feared he might have been taken ill in some alley of the woods; or that he might have fallen into the hands of robbers. At the interval of a small valley rose the mountains of the Abruzzi, the stronghold of banditti. Indeed, the neighborhood had for some time been infested by them; and Barbone, a notorious bandit chief, had often been met prowling about the solitudes of Tusculum. The daring enterprises of these ruffians were well known; the objects of their cupidity or vengeance were insecure even in palaces. As yet they had respected the possessions of the prince; but the idea of such dangerous spirits hovering about the neighborhood was sufficient to occasion alarm.

The fears of the company increased as evening closed in. The prince ordered out forest guards, and domestics with flambeaux to search for the confessor. They had not departed long, when a slight noise was heard in the corridor of the ground floor. The family were dining on the first floor, and the remaining domestics were occupied in attendance. There was no one on the ground floor at this moment but the housekeeper, the laundress, and three field laborers, who were resting themselves, and conversing with the women.

I heard the noise from below, and presuming it to be occasioned by the return of the absentee, I left the table and hastened downstairs, eager to gain intelligence that might relieve the anxiety of the prince and princess. I had scarcely reached the last step when I beheld before me a man dressed as a bandit; a carbine in his hand, and a stiletto and pistols in his belt. His countenance had a mingled expression of

ferocity and trepidation. He sprang upon me, and exclaimed exultingly, "Ecco il principe!"

I saw at once into what hands I had fallen, but endeavored to summon up coolness and presence of mind. A glance toward the lower end of the corridor showed me several ruffians, clothed and armed in the same manner with the one who had seized me. They were guarding the two females and the field laborers. The robber, who held me firmly by the collar, demanded repeatedly whether or not I were the prince. His object evidently was to carry off the prince, and extort an immense ransom. He was enraged at receiving none but vague replies; for I felt the importance of misleading him.

A sudden thought struck me how I might extricate myself from his clutches. I was unarmed, it is true, but I was vigorous. His companions were at a distance. By a sudden exertion I might wrest myself from him and spring up the staircase, whither he would not dare to follow me singly. The idea was put in execution as soon as conceived. The ruffian's throat was bare: with my right hand I seized him by it, just between the mastoides; with my left hand I grasped the arm which held the carbine. The suddenness of my attack took him completely unawares; and the strangling nature of my grasp paralyzed him. He choked and faltered. I felt his hand relaxing its hold, and was on the point of jerking myself away and darting up the staircase before he could recover himself, when I was suddenly seized by some one from behind.

I had to let go my grasp. The bandit, once more released, fell upon me with fury, and gave me several blows with the butt end of his carbine, one of which wounded me severely in the forehead, and covered me with blood. He took advantage of my being stunned to rifle me of my watch and whatever valuables I had about my person.

When I recovered from the effects of the blow, I heard the voice of the chief of the banditti, who exclaimed: "Quello e il principe, siamo contente, audiamo!" (It is the prince, enough,

let us be off.) The band immediately closed round me and dragged me out of the palace, bearing off the three laborers likewise.

I had no hat on, and the blood was flowing from my wound; I managed to stanch it, however, with my pocket-handkerchief, which I bound round my forehead. The captain of the band conducted me in triumph, supposing me to be the prince. We had gone some distance before he learned his mistake from one of the laborers. His rage was terrible. It was too late to return to the villa and endeavor to retrieve his error, for by this time the alarm must have been given, and every one in arms. He darted at me a furious look; swore I had deceived him, and caused him to miss his fortune; and told me to prepare for death. The rest of the robbers were equally furious. I saw their hands upon their poniards; and I knew that death was seldom an empty menace with these ruffians.

The laborers saw the peril into which their information had betrayed me, and eagerly assured the captain that I was a man for whom the prince would pay a great ransom. This produced a pause. For my part, I cannot say that I had been much dismayed by their menaces. I mean not to make any boast of courage; but I have been so schooled to hardship during the late revolutions, and have beheld death around me in so many perilous and disastrous scenes, that I have become, in some measure, callous to its terrors. The frequent hazard of life makes a man at length as reckless of it as a gambler of his money. To their threat of death, I replied: "That the sooner it was executed the better." This reply seemed to astonish the captain, and the prospect of ransom held out by the laborers had, no doubt, a still greater effect on him. He considered for a moment; assumed a calmer manner, and made a sign to his companions, who had remained waiting for my death warrant. "*Forward,*" said he, "we will see about this matter by-and-by."

We descended rapidly toward the road of la Molara, which leads to Rocca Priori. In the midst of this road is

a solitary inn. The captain ordered the troop to halt at the distance of a pistol shot from it; and enjoined profound silence. He then approached the threshold alone with noiseless steps. He examined the outside of the door very narrowly, and then returning precipitately, made a sign for the troop to continue its march in silence. It has since been ascertained that this was one of those infamous inns which are the secret resorts of banditti. The innkeeper had an understanding with the captain, as he most probably had with the chiefs of the different bands. When any of the patrols and gens d'armes were quartered at his house, the brigands were warned of it by a preconcerted signal on the door; when there was no such signal, they might enter with safety and be sure of welcome. Many an isolated inn among the lonely parts of the Roman territories, and especially on the skirts of the mountains, have the same dangerous and suspicious character. They are places where the banditti gather information; where they concert their plans, and where the unwary traveler, remote from hearing or assistance, is sometimes betrayed to the stiletto of the midnight murderer.

After pursuing our road a little further, we struck off toward the woody mountains which envelop Rocca Priori. Our march was long and painful, with many circuits and windings; at length we clambered a steep ascent, covered with a thick forest, and when we had reached the center, I was told to seat myself on the earth. No sooner had I done so, than, at a sign from their chief, the robbers surrounded me, and spreading their great cloaks from one to the other, formed a kind of pavilion of mantles, to which their bodies might be said to seem as columns. The captain then struck a light, and a flambeau was lighted immediately. The mantles were extended to prevent the light of the flambeau from being seen through the forest. Anxious as was my situation, I could not look round upon this screen of dusky drapery, relieved by the bright colors of the robbers' underdresses, the gleaming of their weapons, and the variety of strong-marked countenances, lighted up by the flambeau, without

admiring the picturesque effect of the scene. It was quite theatrical.

The captain now held an ink-horn, and giving me pen and paper, ordered me to write what he should dictate. I obeyed. It was a demand, couched in the style of robber eloquence, "that the prince should send three thousand dollars for my ransom, or that my death should be the consequence of a refusal."

I knew enough of the desperate character of these beings to feel assured this was not an idle menace. Their only mode of insuring attention to their demands is to make the infliction of the penalty inevitable. I saw at once, however, that the demand was preposterous, and made in improper language.

I told the captain so, and assured him that so extravagant a sum would never be granted; "that I was neither a friend nor relative of the prince, but a mere artist, employed to execute certain paintings. That I had nothing to offer as a ransom but the price of my labors; if this were not sufficient my life was at their disposal: it was a thing on which I set but little value."

I was the more hardy in my reply, because I saw that coolness and hardihood had an effect upon the robbers. It is true, as I finished speaking the captain laid his hand upon his stiletto, but he restrained himself, and snatching the letter, folded it, and ordered me, in a peremptory tone, to address it to the prince. He then dispatched one of the laborers with it to Tusculum, who promised to return with all possible speed.

The robbers now prepared themselves for sleep, and I was told that I might do the same. They spread their great cloaks on the ground and lay down around me. One was stationed at a little distance to keep watch, and was relieved every two hours. The strangeness and wildness of this mountain bivouac, among lawless beings whose hands seemed ever ready to grasp the stiletto, and with whom life was so trivial and insecure, was enough to banish repose. The coldness of

the earth and of the dew, however, had a still greater effect than mental causes in disturbing my rest. The airs wafted to these mountains from the distant Mediterranean diffused a great chilliness as the night advanced. An expedient suggested itself. I called one of my fellow-prisoners, the laborers, and made him lie down beside me. Whenever one of my limbs became chilled I approached it to the robust limb of my neighbor, and borrowed some of his warmth. In this way I was able to obtain a little sleep.

Day at length dawned, and I was roused from my slumber by the voice of the chieftain. He desired me to rise and follow him. I obeyed. On considering his physiognomy attentively, it appeared a little softened. He even assisted me in scrambling up the steep forest among rocks and brambles. Habit had made him a vigorous mountaineer; but I found it excessively toilsome to climb those rugged heights. We arrived at length at the summit of the mountain.

Here it was that I felt all the enthusiasm of my art suddenly awakened; and I forgot, in an instant, all perils and fatigues at this magnificent view of the sunrise in the midst of the mountains of Abruzzi. It was on these heights that Hannibal first pitched his camp, and pointed out Rome to his followers. The eye embraces a vast extent of country. The minor height of Tusculum, with its villas, and its sacred ruins, lie below; the Sabine hills and the Albanian mountains stretch on either hand, and beyond Tusculum and Fregati spreads out the immense Campagna, with its line of tombs, and here and there a broken aqueduct stretching across it, and the towers and domes of the eternal city in the midst.

Fancy this scene lighted up by the glories of a rising sun, and bursting upon my sight, as I looked forth from among the majestic forests of the Abruzzi. Fancy, too, the savage foreground, made still more savage by groups of the banditti, armed and dressed in their wild, picturesque manner, and you will not wonder that the enthusiasm of a painter for a moment overpowered all his other feelings.

The banditti were astonished at my admiration of a scene which familiarity had made so common in their eyes. I took advantage of their halting at this spot, drew forth a quire of drawing-paper, and began to sketch the features of the landscape. The height, on which I was seated, was wild and solitary, separated from the ridge of Tusculum by a valley nearly three miles wide; though the distance appeared less from the purity of the atmosphere. This height was one of the favorite retreats of the banditti, commanding a lookout over the country; while, at the same time, it was covered with forests, and distant from the populous haunts of men.

While I was sketching, my attention was called off for a moment by the cries of birds and the bleatings of sheep. I looked around, but could see nothing of the animals that uttered them. They were repeated, and appeared to come from the summits of the trees. On looking more narrowly, I perceived six of the robbers perched on the tops of oaks, which grew on the breezy crest of the mountain, and commanded an uninterrupted prospect. From hence they were keeping a lookout, like so many vultures; casting their eyes into the depths of the valley below us; communicating with each other by signs, or holding discourse in sounds, which might be mistaken by the wayfarer for the cries of hawks and crows, or the bleating of the mountain flocks. After they had reconnoitered the neighborhood, and finished their singular discourse, they descended from their airy perch, and returned to their prisoners. The captain posted three of them at three naked sides of the mountain, while he remained to guard us with what appeared his most trusty companion.

I had my book of sketches in my hand; he requested to see it, and after having run his eye over it, expressed himself convinced of the truth of my assertion that I was a painter. I thought I saw a gleam of good feeling dawning in him, and determined to avail myself of it. I knew that the worst of men have their good points and their accessible sides, if one would but study them carefully. Indeed, there

is a singular mixture in the character of the Italian robber. With reckless ferocity he often mingles traits of kindness and good humor. He is often not radically bad, but driven to his course of life by some unpremeditated crime, the effect of those sudden bursts of passion to which the Italian temperament is prone. This has compelled him to take to the mountains, or, as it is technically termed among them, "andare in Campagna." He has become a robber by profession; but like a soldier, when not in action he can lay aside his weapon and his fierceness and become like other men.

I took occasion from the observations of the captain on my sketchings to fall into conversation with him. I found him sociable and communicative. By degrees I became completely at my ease with him. I had fancied I perceived about him a degree of self-love which I determined to make use of. I assumed an air of careless frankness, and told him that, as artist, I pretended to the power of judging of the physiognomy; that I thought I perceived something in his features and demeanor which announced him worthy of higher fortunes. That he was not formed to exercise the profession to which he had abandoned himself; that he had talents and qualities fitted for a nobler sphere of action; that he had but to change his course of life, and in a legitimate career the same courage and endowments which now made him an object of terror would insure him the applause and admiration of society.

I had not mistaken my man. My discourse both touched and excited him. He seized my hand, pressed it, and replied with strong emotion, "You have guessed the truth; you have judged me rightly." He remained for a moment silent; then with a kind of effort he resumed: "I will tell you some particulars of my life, and you will perceive that it was the oppression of others rather than my own crimes that drove me to the mountains. I sought to serve my fellowmen, and they have persecuted me from among them." We seated ourselves on the grass, and the robber gave me the following anecdotes of his history.

THE STORY OF THE BANDIT CHIEF-TAIN

I AM a native of the village of Prossedi. My father was easy enough in circumstances, and we lived peaceably and independently, cultivating our fields. All went on well with us until a new chief of the sbirri was sent to our village to take command of the police. He was an arbitrary fellow, prying into everything, and practicing all sorts of vexations and oppressions in the discharge of his office.

I was at that time eighteen years of age, and had a natural love of justice and good neighborhood. I had also a little education, and knew something of history, so as to be able to judge a little of men and their actions. All this inspired me with hatred for this paltry despot. My own family, also, became the object of his suspicion or dislike, and felt more than once the arbitrary abuse of his power. These things worked together on my mind, and I gasped after vengeance. My character was always ardent and energetic; and acted upon by my love of justice, determined me by one blow to rid the country of the tyrant.

Full of my project I rose one morning before peep of day, and concealing a stiletto under my waistcoat—here you see it!—(and he drew forth a long keen poniard)—I lay in wait for him in the outskirts of the village. I knew all his haunts, and his habit of making his rounds and prowling about like a wolf, in the gray of the morning; at length I met him and attacked him with fury. He was armed, but I took him unawares, and was full of youth and vigor. I gave him repeated blows to make sure work, and laid him lifeless at my feet.

When I was satisfied that I had done for him, I returned with all haste to the village, but had the ill-luck to meet two of the sbirri as I entered it. They accosted me and asked if

I had seen their chief. I assumed an air of tranquillity, and told them I had not. They continued on their way, and, within a few hours, brought back the dead body to Prossedi. Their suspicions of me being already awakened, I was arrested and thrown into prison. Here I lay several weeks, when the prince, who was Seigneur of Prossedi, directed judicial proceedings against me. I was brought to trial, and a witness was produced who pretended to have seen me not far from the bleeding body, and flying with precipitation, so I was condemned to the galleys for thirty years.

“Curse on such laws,” vociferated the bandit, foaming with rage; “curse on such a government, and ten thousand curses on the prince who caused me to be adjudged so rigorously, while so many other Roman princes harbor and protect assassins a thousand times more culpable. What had I done but what was inspired by a love of justice and my country? Why was my act more culpable than that of Brutus, when he sacrificed Cæsar to the cause of liberty and justice?”

There was something at once both lofty and ludicrous in the rhapsody of this robber chief, thus associating himself with one of the great names of antiquity. It showed, however, that he had at least the merit of knowing the remarkable facts in the history of his country. He became more calm, and resumed his narrative.

I was conducted to Civita Vecchia in fetters. My heart was burning with rage. I had been married scarce six months to a woman whom I passionately loved, and who was pregnant. My family was in despair. For a long time I made unsuccessful efforts to break my chain. At length I found a morsel of iron which I hid carefully, and endeavored with a pointed flint to fashion it into a kind of file. I occupied myself in this work during the night-time, and when it was finished, I made out, after a long time, to sever one of the rings of my chain. My flight was successful.

I wandered for several weeks in the mountains which surround Prossedi, and found means to inform my wife of the

place where I was concealed. She came often to see me. I had determined to put myself at the head of an armed band. She endeavored for a long time to dissuade me; but finding my resolution fixed, she at length united in my project of vengeance, and brought me, herself, my poniard.

By her means I communicated with several brave fellows of the neighboring villages, who I knew to be ready to take to the mountains, and only panting for an opportunity to exercise their daring spirits. We soon formed a combination, procured arms, and we have had ample opportunities of revenging ourselves for the wrongs and injuries which most of us have suffered. Everything has succeeded with us until now, and had it not been for our blunder in mistaking you for the prince, our fortunes would have been made.

Here the robber concluded his story. He had talked himself into complete companionship, and assured me he no longer bore me any grudge for the error of which I had been the innocent cause. He even professed a kindness for me, and wished me to remain some time with them. He promised to give me a sight of certain grottoes which they occupied beyond Villettri, and whither they resorted during the intervals of their expeditions. He assured me that they led a jovial life there; had plenty of good cheer; slept on beds of moss, and were waited upon by young and beautiful females, whom I might take for models.

I confess I felt my curiosity roused by his descriptions of these grottoes and their inhabitants: they realized those scenes in robber-story which I had always looked upon as mere creations of the fancy. I should gladly have accepted his invitation, and paid a visit to those caverns, could I have felt more secure in my company.

I began to find my situation less painful. I had evidently propitiated the good-will of the chieftain, and hoped that he might release me for a moderate ransom. A new alarm, however, awaited me. While the captain was looking out with impatience for the return of the messenger who had

been sent to the prince, the sentinel who had been posted on the side of the mountain facing the plain of la Molara came running toward us with precipitation. "We are betrayed!" exclaimed he. "The police of Frescati are after us. A party of carabinieri have just stopped at the inn below the mountain." Then laying his hand on his stiletto, he swore, with a terrible oath, that if they made the least movement toward the mountain, my life and the lives of my fellow-prisoners should answer for it.

The chieftain resumed all his ferocity of demeanor, and approved of what his companion said; but when the latter had returned to his post, he turned to me with a softened air: "I must act as chief," said he, "and humor my dangerous subalterns. It is a law with us to kill our prisoners rather than suffer them to be rescued; but do not be alarmed. In case we are surprised keep by me; fly with us, and I will consider myself responsible for your life."

There was nothing very consolatory in this arrangement which would have placed me between two dangers; I scarcely knew, in case of flight, which I should have most to apprehend from, the carbines of the pursuers or the stilettos of the pursued. I remained silent, however, and endeavored to maintain a look of tranquillity.

For an hour was I kept in this state of peril and anxiety. The robbers, crouching among their leafy coverts, kept an eagle watch upon the carabinieri below, as they loitered about the inn; sometimes lolling about the portal; sometimes disappearing for several minutes, then sallying out, examining their weapons, pointing in different directions and apparently asking questions about the neighborhood; not a movement or gesture was lost upon the keen eyes of the brigands. At length we were relieved from our apprehensions. The carabinieri, having finished their refreshment, seized their arms, continued along the valley toward the great road, and gradually left the mountain behind them. "I felt almost certain," said the chief, "that they could not be sent after us. They know too well how prisoners have fared in our hands

on similar occasions. Our laws in this respect are inflexible, and are necessary for our safety. If we once flinched from them, there would no longer be such thing as a ransom to be procured."

There were no signs yet of the messenger's return. I was preparing to resume my sketching, when the captain drew a quire of paper from his knapsack—"Come," said he, laughing, "you are a painter; take my likeness. The leaves of your portfolio are small; draw it on this." I gladly consented, for it was a study that seldom presents itself to a painter. I recollected that Salvator Rosa in his youth had voluntarily sojourned for a time among the banditti of Calabria, and had filled his mind with the savage scenery and savage associates by which he was surrounded. I seized my pencil with enthusiasm at the thought. I found the captain the most docile of subjects, and after various shiftings of position, I placed him in an attitude to my mind.

Picture to yourself a stern, muscular figure, in fanciful bandit costume, with pistols and poniards in belt, his brawny neck bare, a handkerchief loosely thrown around it, and the two ends in front strung with rings of all kinds, the spoils of travelers; relics and medals hung on his breast; his hat decorated with various-colored ribbons; his vest and short breeches of bright colors and finely embroidered; his legs in buskins or leggings. Fancy him on a mountain height, among wild rocks and rugged oaks, leaning on his carbine as if meditating some exploit, while far below are beheld villages and villas, the scenes of his maraudings, with the wide Campagna dimly extending in the distance.

The robber was pleased with the sketch, and seemed to admire himself upon paper. I had scarcely finished when the laborer arrived who had been sent for my ransom. He had reached Tusculum two hours after midnight. He brought me a letter from the prince, who was in bed at the time of his arrival. As I had predicted, he treated the demand as extravagant, but offered five hundred dollars for my ransom. Having no money by him at the moment, he had sent a note

for the amount, payable to whomever should conduct me safe and sound to Rome. I presented the note of hand to the chieftain; he received it with a shrug. "Of what use are notes of hand to us?" said he. "Who can we send with you to Rome to receive it? We are all marked men, known and described at every gate and military post, and village church-door. No, we must have gold and silver; let the sum be paid in cash and you shall be restored to liberty."

The captain again placed a sheet of paper before me to communicate his determination to the prince. When I had finished the letter and took the sheet from the quire, I found on the opposite side of it the portrait which I had just been tracing. I was about to tear it off and give it to the chief.

"Hold," said he, "let it go to Rome; let them see what kind of looking fellow I am. Perhaps the prince and his friends may form as good an opinion of me from my face as you have done."

This was said sportively, yet it was evident there was vanity lurking at the bottom. Even this wary, distrustful chief of banditti forgot for a moment his usual foresight and precaution in the common wish to be admired. He never reflected what use might be made of this portrait in his pursuit and conviction.

The letter was folded and directed, and the messenger departed again for Tusculum. It was now eleven o'clock in the morning, and as yet we had eaten nothing. In spite of all my anxiety, I began to feel a craving appetite. I was glad, therefore, to hear the captain talk something of eating. He observed that for three days and nights they had been lurking about among rocks and woods, meditating their expedition to Tusculum, during which all their provisions had been exhausted. He should now take measures to procure a supply. Leaving me, therefore, in the charge of his comrade, in whom he appeared to have implicit confidence, he departed, assuring me that in less than two hours we should make a good dinner. Where it was to come from was an

enigma to me, though it was evident these beings had their secret friends and agents throughout the country.

Indeed, the inhabitants of these mountains and of the valleys which they embosom are a rude, half civilized set. The towns and villages among the forests of the Abruzzi, shut up from the rest of the world, are almost like savage dens. It is wonderful that such rude abodes, so little known and visited, should be embosomed in the midst of one of the most traveled and civilized countries of Europe. Among these regions the robber prowls unmolested; not a mountaineer hesitates to give him secret harbor and assistance. The shepherds, however, who tend their flocks among the mountains, are the favorite emissaries of the robbers, when they would send messages down to the valleys either for ransom or supplies. The shepherds of the Abruzzi are as wild as the scenes they frequent. They are clad in a rude garb of black or brown sheepskin; they have high conical hats, and coarse sandals of cloth bound round their legs with thongs, similar to those worn by the robbers. They carry long staffs, on which as they lean they form picturesque objects in the lonely landscape, and they are followed by their ever-constant companion, the dog. They are a curious, questioning set, glad at any time to relieve the monotony of their solitude by the conversation of the passer-by, and the dog will lend an attentive ear, and put on as sagacious and inquisitive a look as his master.

But I am wandering from my story. I was now left alone with one of the robbers, the confidential companion of the chief. He was the youngest and most vigorous of the band, and though his countenance had something of that dissolute fierceness which seems natural to this desperate, lawless mode of life, yet there were traits of manly beauty about it. As an artist I could not but admire it. I had remarked in him an air of abstraction and reverie, and at times a movement of inward suffering and impatience. He now sat on the ground; his elbows on his knees, his head resting between his clinched fists, and his eyes fixed on the earth

with an expression of sad and bitter rumination. I had grown familiar with him from repeated conversations, and had found him superior in mind to the rest of the band. I was anxious to seize every opportunity of sounding the feelings of these singular beings. I fancied I read in the countenance of this one traces of self-condemnation and remorse; and the ease with which I had drawn forth the confidence of the chieftain encouraged me to hope the same with his followers.

After a little preliminary conversation I ventured to ask him if he did not feel regret at having abandoned his family and taken to this dangerous profession. "I feel," replied he, "but one regret, and that will end only with my life;" as he said this he pressed his clinched fists upon his bosom, drew his breath through his set teeth, and added with deep emotion, "I have something within here that stifles me; it is like a burning iron consuming my very heart. I could tell you a miserable story, but not now—another time." He relapsed into his former position, and sat with his head between his hands, muttering to himself in broken ejaculations, and what appeared at times to be curses and maledictions. I saw he was not in a mood to be disturbed, so I left him to himself. In a little time the exhaustion of his feelings, and probably the fatigues he had undergone in this expedition, began to produce drowsiness. He struggled with it for a time, but the warmth and sultriness of midday made it irresistible, and he at length stretched himself upon the herbage and fell asleep.

I now beheld a chance of escape within my reach. My guard lay before me at my mercy. His vigorous limbs relaxed by sleep; his bosom open for the blow; his carbine slipped from his nerveless grasp, and lying by his side; his stiletto half out of the pocket in which it was usually carried. But two of his comrades were in sight, and those at a considerable distance, on the edge of the mountain; their backs turned to us, and their attention occupied in keeping a look-out upon the plain. Through a strip of intervening forest,

and at the foot of a steep descent, I beheld the village of Rocca Priori. To have secured the carbine of the sleeping brigand, to have seized upon his poniard and have plunged it in his heart, would have been the work of an instant. Should he die without noise I might dart through the forest and down to Rocca Priori before my flight might be discovered. In case of alarm, I should still have a fair start of the robbers, and a chance of getting beyond the reach of their shot.

Here then was an opportunity for both escape and vengeance; perilous, indeed, but powerfully tempting. Had my situation been more critical I could not have resisted it. I reflected, however, for a moment. The attempt, if successful, would be followed by the sacrifice of my two fellow-prisoners, who were sleeping profoundly, and could not be awakened in time to escape. The laborer who had gone after the ransom might also fall a victim to the rage of the robbers, without the money which he brought being saved. Besides, the conduct of the chief toward me made me feel certain of speedy deliverance. These reflections overcame the first powerful impulse, and I calmed the turbulent agitation which it had awakened.

I again took out my materials for drawing, and amused myself with sketching the magnificent prospect. It was now about noon, and everything seemed sunk into repose, like the bandit that lay sleeping before me. The noontide stillness that reigned over these mountains, the vast landscape below, gleaming with distant towns and dotted with various habitations and signs of life, yet all so silent, had a powerful effect upon my mind. The intermediate valleys, too, that lie among mountains have a peculiar air of solitude. Few sounds are heard at midday to break the quiet of the scene. Sometimes the whistle of a solitary muleteer, lagging with his lazy animal along the road that winds through the center of the valley; sometimes the faint piping of a shepherd's reed from the side of the mountain, or sometimes the bell of an ass slowly pacing along, followed by a monk with bare feet

and bare shining head, and carrying provisions to the convent.

I had continued to sketch for some time among my sleeping companions, when at length I saw the captain, of the band approaching, followed by a peasant leading a mule, on which was a well-filled sack. I at first apprehended that this was some new prey fallen into the hands of the robbers, but the contented look of the peasant soon relieved me, and I was rejoiced to hear that it was our promised repast. The brigands now came running from the three sides of the mountain, having the quick scent of vultures. Every one busied himself in unloading the mule and relieving the sack of its contents.

The first thing that made its appearance was an enormous ham of a color and plumpness that would have inspired the pencil of Teniers. It was followed by a large cheese, a bag of boiled chestnuts, a little barrel of wine, and a quantity of good household bread. Everything was arranged on the grass with a degree of symmetry, and the captain, presenting me his knife, requested me to help myself. We all seated ourselves round the viands, and nothing was heard for a time but the sound of vigorous mastication, or the gurgling of the barrel of wine as it revolved briskly about the circle. My long fasting and the mountain air and exercise had given me a keen appetite, and never did repast appear to me more excellent or picturesque.

From time to time one of the band was dispatched to keep a lookout upon the plain: no enemy was at hand, and the dinner was undisturbed.

The peasant received nearly twice the value of his provisions, and set off down the mountain highly satisfied with his bargain. I felt invigorated by the hearty meal I had made, and notwithstanding that the wound I had received the evening before was painful, yet I could not but feel extremely interested and gratified by the singular scenes continually presented to me. Everything seemed pictured about these wild beings and their haunts. Their bivouacs, their

groups on guard, their indolent noontide repose on the mountain brow, their rude repast on the herbage among rocks and trees, everything presented a study for a painter. But it was toward the approach of evening that I felt the highest enthusiasm awakened.

The setting sun, declining beyond the vast Campagna, shed its rich yellow beams on the woody summits of the Abruzzi. Several mountains crowned with snow shone brilliantly in the distance, contrasting their brightness with others, which, thrown into shade, assumed deep tints of purple and violet. As the evening advanced, the landscape darkened into a sterner character. The immense solitude around; the wild mountains broken into rocks and precipices, intermingled with vast oak, cork, and chestnuts; and the groups of banditti in the foreground, reminded me of those savage scenes of Salvator Rosa.

To beguile the time the captain proposed to his comrades to spread before me their jewels and cameos, as I must doubtless be a judge of such articles, and able to inform them of their nature. He set the example, the others followed it, and in a few moments I saw the grass before me sparkling with jewels and gems that would have delighted the eyes of an antiquary or a fine lady. Among them were several precious jewels and antique intaglios and cameos of great value, the spoils doubtless of travelers of distinction. I found that they were in the habit of selling their booty in the frontier towns. As these in general were thinly and poorly peopled, and little frequented by travelers, they could offer no market for such valuable articles of taste and luxury. I suggested to them the certainty of their readily obtaining great prices for these gems among the rich strangers with which Rome was thronged.

The impression made upon their greedy minds was immediately apparent. One of the band, a young man, and the least known, requested permission of the captain to depart the following day in disguise for Rome, for the purpose of traffic; promising on the faith of a bandit (a sacred pledge

among them) to return in two days to any place he might appoint. The captain consented, and a curious scene took place. The robbers crowded round him eagerly, confiding to him such of their jewels as they wished to dispose of, and giving him instructions what to demand. There was bargaining and exchanging and selling of trinkets among themselves, and I beheld my watch, which had a chain and valuable seals, purchased by the young robber merchant of the ruffian who had plundered me for sixty dollars. I now conceived a faint hope that if it went to Rome I might somehow or other regain possession of it.

In the meantime day declined, and no messenger returned from Tusculum.

The idea of passing another night in the woods was extremely disheartening; for I began to be satisfied with what I had seen of robber life. The chieftain now ordered his men to follow him, that he might station them at their posts, adding, that if the messenger did not return before night they must shift their quarters to some other place.

I was again left alone with the young bandit who had before guarded me: he had the same gloomy air and haggard eye, with now and then a bitter sardonic smile. I was determined to probe this ulcerated heart, and reminded him of a kind of promise he had given me to tell me the cause of his suffering.

It seemed to me as if these troubled spirits were glad of an opportunity to disburden themselves; and of having some fresh undiseased mind with which they could communicate. I had hardly made the request but he seated himself by my side, and gave me his story in, as nearly as I can recollect, the following words.

THE STORY OF THE YOUNG ROBBER

I WAS born at the little town of Frosinone, which lies at the skirts of the Abruzzi. My father had made a little property in trade, and gave me some education, as he intended me for the church; but I had kept gay company too much to relish the cowl, so I grew up a loiterer about the place. I was a heedless fellow, a little quarrelsome on occasions, but good-humored in the main, so I made my way very well for a time, until I fell in love. There lived in our town a surveyor or land bailiff, of the prince's, who had a young daughter, a beautiful girl of sixteen. She was looked upon as something better than the common run of our townsfolk, and kept almost entirely at home. I saw her occasionally, and became madly in love with her, she looked so fresh and tender, and so different from the sunburned females to whom I had been accustomed.

As my father kept me in money, I always dressed well, and took all opportunities of showing myself to advantage in the eyes of the little beauty. I used to see her at church; and as I could play a little upon the guitar, I gave her a tune sometimes under her window of an evening; and I tried to have interviews with her in her father's vineyard, not far from the town, where she sometimes walked. She was evidently pleased with me, but she was young and shy, and her father kept a strict eye upon her, and took alarm at my attentions, for he had a bad opinion of me, and looked for a better match for his daughter. I became furious at the difficulties thrown in my way, having been accustomed always to easy success among the women, being considered one of the smartest young fellows of the place.

Her father brought home a suitor for her; a rich farmer from a neighboring town. The wedding-day was appointed, and preparations were making. I got sight of her at her

window, and I thought she looked sadly at me. I determined the match should not take place, cost what it might. I met her intended bridegroom in the market-place, and could not restrain the expression of my rage. A few hot words passed between us, when I drew my stiletto and stabbed him to the heart. I fled to a neighboring church for refuge; and with a little money I obtained absolution; but I did not dare to venture from my asylum.

At that time our captain was forming his troop. He had known me from boyhood, and, hearing of my situation, came to me in secret, and made such offers that I agreed to enlist myself among his followers. Indeed, I had more than once thought of taking to this mode of life, having known several brave fellows of the mountains, who used to spend their money freely among us youngsters of the town. I accordingly left my asylum late one night, repaired to the appointed place of meeting, took the oaths prescribed, and became one of the troop. We were for some time in a distant part of the mountains, and our wild adventurous kind of life hit my fancy wonderfully, and diverted my thoughts. At length they returned with all their violence to the recollection of Rosetta. The solitude in which I often found myself gave me time to brood over her image, and as I have kept watch at night over our sleeping camp in the mountains, my feelings have been roused almost to a fever.

At length we shifted our ground, and determined to make a descent upon the road between Terracina and Naples. In the course of our expedition, we passed a day or two in the woody mountains which rise above Frosinone. I cannot tell you how I felt when I looked down upon the place and distinguished the residence of Rosetta. I determined to have an interview with her; but to what purpose? I could not expect that she would quit her home, and accompany me in my hazardous life among the mountains. She had been brought up too tenderly for that; and when I looked upon the women who were associated with some of our troop, I could not have borne the thoughts of her being their com-

panion. All return to my former life was likewise hopeless; for a price was set upon my head. Still I determined to see her; the very hazard and fruitlessness of the thing made me furious to accomplish it.

It is about three weeks since I persuaded our captain to draw down to the vicinity of Frosinone, in hopes of entrapping some of its principal inhabitants and compelling them to a ransom. We were lying in ambush toward evening, not far from the vineyard of Rosetta's father. I stole quietly from my companions, and drew near to reconnoiter the place of her frequent walks.

How my heart beat when, among the vines, I beheld the gleaming of a white dress! I knew it must be Rosetta's; it being rare for any female of the place to dress in white. I advanced secretly and without noise, until, putting aside the vines, I stood suddenly before her. She uttered a piercing shriek, but I seized her in my arms, put my hand upon her mouth and conjured her to be silent. I poured out all the frenzy of my passion; offered to renounce my mode of life, to put my fate in her hands, to fly with her where we might live in safety together. All that I could say or do would not pacify her. Instead of love, horror and affright seemed to have taken possession of her breast.—She struggled partly from my grasp and filled the air with her cries. In an instant the captain and rest of my companions were around us. I would have given anything at that moment had she been safe out of our hands and in her father's house. It was too late. The captain pronounced her a prize, and ordered that she should be borne to the mountains. I represented to him that she was my prize, that I had a previous claim to her; and I mentioned my former attachment. He sneered bitterly in reply; observed that brigands had no business with village intrigues, and that, according to the laws of the troop, all spoils of the kind were determined by lot. Love and jealousy were raging in my heart, but I had to choose between obedience and death. I surrendered her to the captain, and we made for the mountains.

She was overcome by affright, and her steps were so feeble and faltering that it was necessary to support her. I could not endure the idea that my comrades should touch her, and assuming a forced tranquillity, begged that she might be confided to me, as one to whom she was more accustomed. The captain regarded me for a moment with a searching look, but I bore it without flinching, and he consented. I took her in my arms: she was almost senseless. Her head rested on my shoulder, her mouth was near to mine. I felt her breath on my face, and it seemed to fan the flame which devoured me. Oh, God! to have this glowing treasure in my arms, and yet to think it was not mine!

We arrived at the foot of the mountain. I ascended it with difficulty, particularly where the woods were thick; but I would not relinquish my delicious burden. I reflected with rage, however, that I must soon do so. The thought that so delicate a creature must be abandoned to my rude companions maddened me. I felt tempted, the stiletto in my hand, to cut my way through them all, and bear her off in triumph. I scarcely conceived the idea before I saw its rashness; but my brain was fevered with the thought that any but myself should enjoy her charms. I endeavored to outstrip my companions by the quickness of my movements; and to get a little distance ahead, in case any favorable opportunity of escape should present. Vain effort! The voice of the captain suddenly ordered a halt. I trembled but had to obey. The poor girl partly opened a languid eye, but was without strength or motion. I laid her upon the grass. The captain darted on me a terrible look of suspicion, and ordered me to scour the woods with my companions in search of some shepherd who might be sent to her father's to demand a ransom.

I saw at once the peril. To resist with violence was certain death; but to leave her alone in the power of the captain!—I spoke out then with a fervor inspired by my passion and my despair. I reminded the captain that I was the first to seize her; that she was my prize, and that my previous

attachment for her should make her sacred among my companions. I insisted, therefore, that he should pledge me his word to respect her; otherwise I should refuse obedience to his orders. His only reply was to cock his carbine; and at the signal my comrades did the same. They laughed with cruelty at my impotent rage. What could I do? I felt the madness of resistance. I was menaced on all hands, and my companions obliged me to follow them. She remained alone with the chief—yes, alone—and almost lifeless!—

Here the robber paused in his recital, overpowered by his emotions. Great drops of sweat stood on his forehead; he panted rather than breathed; his brawny bosom rose and fell like the waves of a troubled sea. When he had become a little calm, he continued his recital.

I was not long in finding a shepherd, said he. I ran with the rapidity of a deer, eager, if possible, to get back before what I dreaded might take place. I had left my companions far behind, and I rejoined them before they had reached one-half the distance I had made. I hurried them back to the place where we had left the captain. As we approached, I beheld him seated by the side of Rosetta. His triumphant look, and the desolate condition of the unfortunate girl, left me no doubt of her fate. I know not how I restrained my fury.

It was with extreme difficulty, and by guiding her hand, that she was made to trace a few characters, requesting her father to send three hundred dollars as her ransom. The letter was dispatched by the shepherd. When he was gone, the chief turned sternly to me: "You have set an example," said he, "of mutiny and self-will, which if indulged would be ruinous to the troop. Had I treated you as our laws require, this bullet would have been driven through your brain. But you are an old friend: I have borne patiently with your fury and your folly; I have even protected you from a foolish passion that would have unmanned you. As to this girl, the laws of our association must have their course." So saying, he gave his commands, lots were drawn, and the helpless girl was abandoned to the troop.

Here the robber paused again, panting with fury, and it was some moments before he could resume his story.

Hell, said he, was raging in my heart. I beheld the impossibility of avenging myself, and I felt that, according to the articles in which we stood bound to one another, the captain was in the right. I rushed with frenzy from the place. I threw myself upon the earth; tore up the grass with my hands, and beat my head, and gnashed my teeth in agony and rage. When at length I returned I beheld the wretched victim, pale, disheveled, her dress torn and disordered. An emotion of pity for a moment subdued my fiercer feelings. I bore her to the foot of a tree and leaned her gently against it. I took my gourd, which was filled with wine, and applying it to her lips, endeavored to make her swallow a little. To what a condition was she recovered! She, whom I had once seen the pride of Frosinone, who but a short time before I had beheld sporting in her father's vineyard, so fresh and beautiful and happy! Her teeth were clinched; her eyes fixed on the ground; her form without motion, and in a state of absolute insensibility. I hung over her in an agony of recollection of all that she had been, and of anguish at what I now beheld her. I darted round a look of horror at my companions, who seemed like so many fiends exulting in the downfall of an angel, and I felt a horror at myself for being their accomplice.

The captain, always suspicious, saw with his usual penetration what was passing within me, and ordered me to go upon the ridge of woods to keep a lookout upon the neighborhood and await the return of the shepherd. I obeyed, of course, stifling the fury that raged within me, though I felt for the moment that he was my most deadly foe.

On my way, however, a ray of reflection came across my mind. I perceived that the captain was but following with strictness the terrible laws to which we had sworn fidelity. That the passion by which I had been blinded might with justice have been fatal to me but for his forbearance; that he had penetrated my soul, and had taken precautions, by send-

ing me out of the way, to prevent my committing any excess in my anger. From that instant I felt that I was capable of pardoning him.

Occupied with these thoughts, I arrived at the foot of the mountain. The country was solitary and secure; and in a short time I beheld the shepherd at a distance crossing the plain. I hastened to meet him. He had obtained nothing. He had found the father plunged in the deepest distress. He had read the letter with violent emotion, and then calming himself with a sudden exertion, he had replied coldly, "My daughter has been dishonored by those wretches; let her be returned without ransom, or let her die!"

I shuddered at this reply. I knew, according to the laws of our troop, her death was inevitable. Our oaths required it. I felt, nevertheless, that, not having been able to have her to myself, I could become her executioner!

The robber again paused with agitation. I sat musing upon his last frightful words, which proved to what excess the passions may be carried when escaped from all moral restraint. There was a horrible verity in this story that reminded me of some of the tragic fictions of Dante.

We now come to a fatal moment, resumed the bandit. After the report of the shepherd, I returned with him, and the chieftain received from his lips the refusal of the father. At a signal, which we all understood, we followed him some distance from the victim. He there pronounced her sentence of death. Every one stood ready to execute his order; but I interfered. I observed that there was something due to pity, as well as to justice. That I was as ready as any one to approve the implacable law which was to serve as a warning to all those who hesitated to pay the ransoms demanded for our prisoners, but that, though the sacrifice was proper, it ought to be made without cruelty. The night is approaching, continued I; she will soon be wrapped in sleep: let her then be dispatched. All that I now claim on the score of former fondness for her is, let me strike the blow. I will do it as surely but more tenderly than another.

Several raised their voices against my proposition, but the captain imposed silence on them. He told me I might conduct her into a thicket at some distance, and he relied upon my promise.

I hastened to seize my prey. There was a forlorn kind of triumph at having at length become her exclusive possessor. I bore her off into the thickness of the forest. She remained in the same state of insensibility and stupor. I was thankful that she did not recollect me; for had she once murmured my name, I should have been overcome. She slept at length in the arms of him who was to poniard her. Many were the conflicts I underwent before I could bring myself to strike the blow. My heart had become sore by the recent conflicts it had undergone, and I dreaded lest, by procrastination, some other should become her executioner. When her repose had continued for some time, I separated myself gently from her, that I might not disturb her sleep, and seizing suddenly my poniard, plunged it into her bosom. A painful and concentrated murmur, but without any convulsive movement, accompanied her last sigh. So perished this unfortunate.

He ceased to speak. I sat horrorstruck, covering my face with my hands, seeking, as it were, to hide from myself the frightful images he had presented to my mind. I was roused from this silence by the voice of the captain. "You sleep," said he, "and it is time to be off. Come, we must abandon this height, as night is setting in and the messenger is not returned. I will post some one on the mountain edge to conduct him to the place where we shall pass the night."

This was no agreeable news to me. I was sick at heart with the dismal story I had heard. I was harassed and fatigued, and the sight of the banditti began to grow insupportable to me.

The captain assembled his comrades. We rapidly descended the forest which we had mounted with so much difficulty in the morning, and soon arrived in what appeared to

be a frequented road. The robbers proceeded with great caution, carrying their guns cocked, and looking on every side with wary and suspicious eyes. They were apprehensive of encountering the civic patrol. We left Rocca Priori behind us. There was a fountain near by, and as I was excessively thirsty, I begged permission to stop and drink. The captain himself went, and brought me water in his hat. We pursued our route, when, at the extremity of an alley which crossed the road, I perceived a female on horseback, dressed in white. She was alone. I recollected the fate of the poor girl in the story and trembled for her safety.

One of the brigands saw her at the same instant, and, plunging into the bushes, he ran precipitately in the direction toward her. Stopping on the border of the alley, he put one knee to the ground, presented his carbine ready for menace, or to shoot her horse if she attempted to fly, and in this way awaited her approach. I kept my eyes fixed on her with intense anxiety. I felt tempted to shout, and warn her of her danger, though my own destruction would have been the consequence. It was awful to see this tiger crouching ready for a bound, and the poor innocent victim wandering unconsciously near him. Nothing but a mere chance could save her. To my joy, the chance turned in her favor. She seemed almost accidentally to take an opposite path, which led outside of the wood, where the robber dare not venture. To this casual deviation she owed her safety.

I could not imagine why the captain of the band had ventured to such a distance from the height, on which he had placed the sentinel to watch the return of the messenger. He seemed himself uneasy at the risk to which he exposed himself. His movements were rapid and uneasy; I could scarce keep pace with him. At length, after three hours of what might be termed a forced march, we mounted the extremity of the same woods, the summit of which we had occupied during the day; and I learned with satisfaction that we had reached our quarters for the night. "You must be fatigued," said the chieftain; "but it was necessary to

survey the environs, so as not to be surprised during the night. Had we met with the famous civic guard of Rocca Priori, you would have seen fine sport." Such was the indefatigable precaution and forethought of this robber chief, who really gave continual evidences of military talent.

The night was magnificent. The moon rising above the horizon in a cloudless sky faintly lighted up the grand features of the mountains, while lights twinkling here and there, like terrestrial stars, in the wide, dusky expanse of the landscape, betrayed the lonely cabins of the shepherds. Exhausted by fatigue, and by the many agitations I had experienced, I prepared to sleep, soothed by the hope of approaching deliverance. The captain ordered his companions to collect some dry moss; he arranged with his own hands a kind of mattress and pillow of it, and gave me his ample mantle as a covering. I could not but feel both surprised and gratified by such unexpected attentions on the part of this benevolent cutthroat; for there is nothing more striking than to find the ordinary charities, which are matters of course in common life, flourishing by the side of such stern and sterile crime. It is like finding the tender flowers and fresh herbage of the valley growing among the rocks and cinders of the volcano.

Before I fell asleep, I had some further discourse with the captain, who seemed to put great confidence in me. He referred to our previous conversation of the morning; told me he was weary of his hazardous profession; that he had acquired sufficient property, and was anxious to return to the world and lead a peaceful life in the bosom of his family. He wished to know whether it was not in my power to procure him a passport for the United States of America. I applauded his good intentions, and promised to do everything in my power to promote its success. We then parted for the night. I stretched myself upon my couch of moss, which, after my fatigues, felt like a bed of down, and, sheltered by the robber's mantle from all humidity, I slept soundly without waking, until the signal to arise.

It was nearly six o'clock and the day was just dawning.

As the place where we had passed the night was too much exposed we moved up into the thickness of the woods. A fire was kindled. While there was any flame, the mantles were again extended round it; but when nothing remained but glowing cinders, they were lowered, and the robbers seated themselves in a circle.

The scene before me reminded me of some of those described by Homer. There wanted only the victim on the coals, and the sacred knife, to cut off the succulent parts and distribute them around. My companions might have rivaled the grim warriors of Greece. In place of the noble repasts, however, of Achilles and Agamemnon, I beheld displayed on the grass the remains of the ham which had sustained so vigorous an attack on the preceding evening, accompanied by the relics of the bread, cheese and wine.

We had scarcely commenced our frugal breakfast, when I heard again an imitation of the bleating of sheep, similar to what I had heard the day before. The captain answered it in the same tone. Two men were soon after seen descending from the woody height, where we had passed the preceding evening. On nearer approach, they proved to be the sentinel and the messenger. The captain rose and went to meet them. He made a signal for his comrades to join him. They had a short conference, and then returning to me with eagerness, "Your ransom is paid," said he; "you are free!"

Though I had anticipated deliverance, I cannot tell you what a rush of delight these tidings gave me. I cared not to finish my repast, but prepared to depart. The captain took me by the hand; requested permission to write to me, and begged me not to forget the passport. I replied that I hoped to be of effectual service to him, and that I relied on his honor to return the prince's note for five hundred dollars, now that the cash was paid. He regarded me for a moment with surprise; then, seeming to recollect himself, "E giusto," said he, "ecco—adio!"* He delivered me the note, pressed

* It is just—there it is—adieu!

my hand once more, and we separated. The laborers were permitted to follow me, and we resumed with joy our road toward Tusculum.

The artist ceased to speak; the party continued for a few moments to pace the shore of Terracina in silence. The story they had heard had made a deep impression on them, particularly on the fair Venetian, who had gradually regained her husband's arm. At the part that related to the young girl of Frosinone, she had been violently affected; sobs broke from her; she clung close to her husband, and as she looked up to him as if for protection, the moonbeams shining on her beautifully fair countenance showed it paler than usual with terror, while tears glittered in her fine dark eyes. "O caro mio!" would she murmur, shuddering at every atrocious circumstance of the story.

"Corragio, mia vita!" was the reply, as the husband gently and fondly tapped the white hand that lay upon his arm.

The Englishman alone preserved his usual phlegm, and the fair Venetian was piqued at it.

She had pardoned him a want of gallantry toward herself, though a sin of omission seldom met with in the gallant climate of Italy, but the quiet coolness which he maintained in matters which so much affected her, and the slow credence which he had given to the stories which had filled her with alarm, were quite vexatious.

"Santa Maria!" said she to her husband as they retired for the night, "what insensible beings these English are!"

In the morning all was bustle at the inn at Terracina.

The procaccio had departed at daybreak, on its route toward Rome, but the Englishman was yet to start, and the departure of an English equipage is always enough to keep an inn in a bustle. On this occasion there was more than usual stir; for the Englishman, having much property about him, and having been convinced of the real danger of the road, had applied to the police and obtained, by dint of liberal

pay, an escort of eight dragoons and twelve foot-soldiers, as far as Fondi.

Perhaps, too, there might have been a little ostentation at bottom, from which, with great delicacy be it spoken, English travelers are not always exempt; though, to say the truth, he had nothing of it in his manner. He moved about taciturn and reserved as usual, among the gaping crowd, in his gingerbread-colored traveling cap, with his hands in his pockets. He gave laconic orders to John as he packed away the thousand and one indispensable conveniences of the night, double loaded his pistols with great *sang-froid*, and deposited them in the pockets of the carriage, taking no notice of a pair of keen eyes gazing on him from among the herd of loitering idlers. The fair Venetian now came up with a request made in her dulcet tones that he would permit their carriage to proceed under protection of his escort. The Englishman, who was busy loading another pair of pistols for his servant, and held the ramrod between his teeth, nodded assent as a matter of course, but without lifting up his eyes. The fair Venetian was not accustomed to such indifference. "O Dio!" ejaculated she softly as she retired, "come sono freddi questi Inglesi." At length off they set in gallant style, the eight dragoons prancing in front, the twelve foot-soldiers marching in rear, and the carriages moving slowly in the center to enable the infantry to keep pace with them. They had proceeded but a few hundred yards when it was discovered that some indispensable article had been left behind.

In fact, the Englishman's purse was missing, and John was dispatched to the inn to search for it.

This occasioned a little delay, and the carriage of the Venetians drove slowly on. John came back out of breath and out of humor; the purse was not to be found: his master was irritated; he recollected the very place where it lay; the cursed Italian servant had pocketed it. John was again sent back. He returned once more, without the purse, but with the landlord and the whole household at his heels. A thou-

sand ejaculations and protestations, accompanied by all sorts of grimaces and contortions. "No purse had been seen—his excellenza must be mistaken."

No—his excellenza was not mistaken; the purse lay on the marble table, under the mirror: a green purse, half full of gold and silver. Again a thousand grimaces and contortions, and vows by San Genario that no purse of the kind had been seen.

The Englishman became furious. "The waiter had pocketed it. The landlord was a knave. The inn a den of thieves—it was a d——d country—he had been cheated and plundered from one end of it to the other—but he'd have satisfaction—he'd drive right off to the police."

He was on the point of ordering the postilions to turn back, when, on rising, he displaced the cushion of the carriage, and the purse of money fell chinking to the floor.

All the blood in his body seemed to rush into his face. "D——n the purse," said he, as he snatched it up. He dashed a handful of money on the ground before the pale, cringing waiter. "There—be off," cried he; "John, order the postilions to drive on."

Above half an hour had been exhausted in this altercation. The Venetian carriage had loitered along; its passengers looking out from time to time, and expecting the escort every moment to follow. They had gradually turned an angle of the road that shut them out of sight. The little army was again in motion, and made a very picturesque appearance as it wound along at the bottom of the rocks; the morning sunshine beaming upon the weapons of the soldiery.

The Englishman lolled back in his carriage, vexed with himself at what had passed, and consequently out of humor with all the world. As this, however, is no uncommon case with gentlemen who travel for their pleasure, it is hardly worthy of remark.

They had wound up from the coast among the hills, and came to a part of the road that admitted of some prospect ahead.

"I see nothing of the lady's carriage, sir," said John, leaning over from his coach box.

"Hang the lady's carriage!" said the Englishman, crustily; "don't plague me about the lady's carriage; must I be continually pestered with strangers?"

John said not another word, for he understood his master's mood. The road grew more wild and lonely; they were slowly proceeding in a foot pace up a hill; the dragoons were some distance ahead, and had just reached the summit of the hill, when they uttered an exclamation, or rather shout, and galloped forward. The Englishman was roused from his sulky reverie. He stretched his head from the carriage, which had attained the brow of the hill. Before him extended a long hollow defile, commanded on one side by rugged precipitous heights, covered with bushes and scanty forest trees. At some distance he beheld the carriage of the Venetians overturned; a numerous gang of desperadoes were rifling it; the young man and his servant were overpowered and partly stripped, and the lady was in the hands of two of the ruffians. The Englishman seized his pistols, sprang from the carriage, and called upon John to follow him. In the meantime, as the dragoons came forward, the robbers who were busy with the carriage quitted their spoil, formed themselves in the middle of the road, and, taking deliberate aim, fired. One of the dragoons fell, another was wounded, and the whole were for a moment checked and thrown in confusion. The robbers loaded again in an instant. The dragoons had discharged their carbines, but without apparent effect; they received another volley, which, though none fell, threw them again into confusion. The robbers were loading a second time when they saw the foot-soldiers at hand.—"Scampa via!" was the word. They abandoned their prey and retreated up the rocks; the soldiers after them. They fought from cliff to cliff, and bush to bush, the robbers turning every now and then to fire upon their pursuers; the soldiers scrambling after them, and discharging their muskets whenever they could get a chance.



THE ENGLISHMAN'S ADVENTURE.

Irving, Vol. Two, p. 493.

Sometimes a soldier or a robber was shot down, and came tumbling among the cliffs. The dragoons kept firing from below whenever a robber came in sight.

The Englishman had hastened to the scene of action, and the balls discharged at the dragoons had whistled past him as he advanced. One object, however, engrossed his attention. It was the beautiful Venetian lady in the hands of two of the robbers, who, during the confusion of the fight, carried her shrieking up the mountains. He saw her dress gleaming among the bushes, and he sprang up the rocks to intercept the robbers as they bore off their prey. The ruggedness of the steep and the entanglement of the bushes delayed and impeded him. He lost sight of the lady, but was still guided by her cries, which grew fainter and fainter. They were off to the left, while the report of muskets showed that the battle was raging to the right.

At length he came upon what appeared to be a rugged footpath, faintly worn in a gully of the rock, and beheld the ruffians at some distance hurrying the lady up the defile. One of them hearing his approach let go his prey, advanced toward him, and leveling the carbine which had been slung on his back, fired. The ball whizzed through the Englishman's hat and carried with it some of his hair. He returned the fire with one of his pistols and the robber fell. The other brigand now dropped the lady, and, drawing a long pistol from his belt, fired on his adversary with deliberate aim; the ball passed between his left arm and his side, slightly wounding the arm. The Englishman advanced and discharged his remaining pistol, which wounded the robber, but not severely. The brigand drew a stiletto, and rushed upon his adversary, who eluded the blow, receiving merely a slight wound, and defended himself with his pistol, which had a spring bayonet. They closed with one another, and a desperate struggle ensued. The robber was a square-built, thick-set man, powerful, muscular and active. The Englishman, though of larger frame and greater strength, was less active and less accustomed to athletic exercises and feats of hardihood, but he

showed himself practiced and skilled in the art of defense. They were on a craggy height, and the Englishman perceived that his antagonist was striving to press him to the edge.

A side glance showed him also the robber whom he had first wounded, scrambling up to the assistance of his comrade, stiletto in hand. He had, in fact, attained the summit of the cliff, and the Englishman saw him within a few steps, when he heard suddenly the report of a pistol and the ruffian fell. The shot came from John, who had arrived just in time to save his master.

The remaining robber, exhausted by loss of blood and the violence of the contest, showed signs of faltering. His adversary pursued his advantage; pressed on him, and, as his strength relaxed, dashed him headlong from the precipice. He looked after him and saw him lying motionless among the rocks below.

The Englishman now sought the fair Venetian. He found her senseless on the ground. With his servant's assistance he bore her down to the road, where her husband was raving like one distracted.

The occasional discharge of firearms along the height showed that a retreating fight was still kept up by the robbers. The carriage was righted; the baggage was hastily replaced; the Venetian, transported with joy and gratitude, took his lovely and senseless burden in his arms, and the party resumed their route toward Fondi, escorted by the dragoons, leaving the foot-soldiers to ferret out the banditti.

While on the way John dressed his master's wounds, which were found not to be serious.

Before arriving at Fondi the fair Venetian had recovered from her swoon, and was made conscious of her safety and of the mode of her deliverance. Her transports were unbounded; and mingled with them were enthusiastic ejaculations of gratitude to her deliverer. A thousand times did she reproach herself for having accused him of coldness and insensibility. The moment she saw him she rushed into his

arms, and clasped him round the neck with all the vivacity of her nation.

Never was man more embarrassed by the embraces of a fine woman.

"My deliverer! my angel!" exclaimed she.

"Tut! tut!" said the Englishman.

"You are wounded!" shrieked the fair Venetian, as she saw the blood upon his clothes.

"Pooh—nothing at all!"

"O Dio!" exclaimed she, clasping him again round the neck and sobbing on his bosom.

"Pooh!" said the Englishman, looking somewhat foolish; "this is all nonsense."

PART FOURTH

THE MONEY DIGGERS

FOUND AMONG THE PAPERS OF THE LATE DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER

"Now I remember those old women's words
Who in my youth would tell me winter's tales;
And speak of spirits and ghosts that glide by night
About the place where treasure hath been hid."

—MARLOW'S *Jew of Malta*

HELL GATE

ABOUT six miles from the renowned city of the Manhattoes, and in that Sound, or arm of the sea, which passes between the mainland and Nassau or Long Island, there is a narrow strait, where the current is violently compressed between shouldering promontories, and horribly irritated and perplexed by rocks and shoals. Being at the best of times a very violent, hasty current, it takes these impediments in mighty dudgeon: boiling in whirlpools; brawling and fretting in ripples and breakers; and, in short, indulging in all

kinds of wrong-headed paroxysms. At such times, woe to any unlucky vessel that ventures within its clutches.

This termagant humor is said to prevail only at half tides. At low water it is as pacific as any other stream. As the tide rises, it begins to fret; at half tide it rages and roars as if bellowing for more water; but when the tide is full it relapses again into quiet, and for a time seems almost to sleep as soundly as an alderman after dinner. It may be compared to an inveterate hard drinker, who is a peaceable fellow enough when he has no liquor at all, or when he has a skin full, but when half seas over plays the very devil.

This mighty, blustering, bullying little strait was a place of great difficulty and danger to the Dutch navigators of ancient days; hectoring their tub-built barks in a most unruly style; whirling them about in a manner to make any but a Dutchman giddy, and not infrequently stranding them upon rocks and reefs. Whereupon out of sheer spleen they denominated it Hellegat (literally Hell Gut) and solemnly gave it over to the devil. This appellation has since been aptly rendered into English by the name of Hell Gate; and into nonsense by the name of Hurl Gate, according to certain foreign intruders who neither understood Dutch nor English.—May St. Nicholas confound them!

From this strait to the city of the Manhattoes the borders of the Sound are greatly diversified; in one part, on the eastern shore of the island of Mannahatta and opposite Blackwell's Island, being very much broken and indented by rocky nooks, overhung with trees which give them a wild and romantic look.

The flux and reflux of the tide through this part of the Sound is extremely rapid, and the navigation troublesome, by reason of the whirling eddies and counter currents. I speak this from experience, having been much of a navigator of these small seas in my boyhood, and having more than once run the risk of shipwreck and drowning in the course of divers holyday voyages, to which, in common with the Dutch urchins, I was rather prone.

In the midst of this perilous strait, and hard by a group of rocks called "the Hen and Chickens," there lay in my boyish days the wreck of a vessel which had been entangled in the whirlpools and stranded during a storm. There was some wild story about this being the wreck of a pirate, and of some bloody murder, connected with it, which I cannot now recollect. Indeed, the desolate look of this forlorn hulk, and the fearful place where it lay rotting, were sufficient to awaken strange notions concerning it. A row of timber heads, blackened by time, peered above the surface at high water; but at low tide a considerable part of the hull was bare, and its great ribs or timbers, partly stripped of their planks, looked like the skeleton of some sea monster. There was also the stump of a mast, with a few ropes and blocks swinging about and whistling in the wind, while the sea gull wheeled and screamed around this melancholy carcass.

The stories connected with this wreck made it an object of great awe to my boyish fancy; but in truth the whole neighborhood was full of fable and romance for me, abounding with traditions about pirates, hobgoblins, and buried money. As I grew to more mature years I made many researches after the truth of these strange traditions; for I have always been a curious investigator of the valuable but obscure branches of the history of my native province. I found infinite difficulty, however, in arriving at any precise information. In seeking to dig up one fact it is incredible the number of fables which I unearthed; for the whole course of the Sound seemed in my younger days to be like the straits of Pylorus of yore, the very region of fiction. I will say nothing of the Devil's Stepping Stones, by which that arch fiend made his retreat from Connecticut to Long Island, seeing that the subject is likely to be learnedly treated by a worthy friend and contemporary historian* whom I

* For a very interesting account of the Devil and his Stepping Stones, see the learned memoir read before the New York Historical Society since the death of Mr. Knickerbocker, by his friend, an eminent jurist of the place.

have furnished with particulars thereof. Neither will I say anything of the black man in a three-cornered hat, seated in the stern of a jolly-boat, who used to be seen about Hell Gate in stormy weather; and who went by the name of the Pirate's Spuke, or Pirate's Ghost, because I never could meet with any person of stanch credibility who professed to have seen this spectrum; unless it were the widow of Manus Conklin, the blacksmith of Frog's Neck, but then, poor woman, she was a little purblind, and might have been mistaken; though they said she saw further than other folks in the dark.

All this, however, was but little satisfactory in regard to the tales of buried money about which I was most curious; and the following was all that I could for a long time collect that had anything like an air of authenticity.

KIDD THE PIRATE

IN old times, just after the territory of the New Netherlands had been wrested from the hands of their High Mightinesses, the Lords States-General of Holland, by Charles the Second, and while it was as yet in an unquiet state, the province was a favorite resort of adventurers of all kinds, and particularly of buccaneers. These were piratical rovers of the deep, who made sad work in times of peace among the Spanish settlements and Spanish merchant ships. They took advantage of the easy access to the harbor of the Manhattoes, and of the laxity of its scarcely-organized government, to make it a kind of rendezvous, where they might dispose of their ill-gotten spoils, and concert new depredations. Crews of these desperadoes, the runagates of every country and clime, might be seen swaggering, in open day, about the streets of the little burgh; elbowing its quiet Mynheers; trafficking away their rich outlandish plunder, at half price, to the wary merchant, and then squandering their

gains in taverns; drinking, gambling, singing, swearing, shouting, and astounding the neighborhood with sudden brawl and ruffian revelry.

At length the indignation of government was aroused, and it was determined to ferret out this vermin brood from the colonies. Great consternation took place among the pirates on finding justice in pursuit of them, and their old haunts turned to places of peril. They secreted their money and jewels in lonely out-of-the-way places; buried them about the wild shores of the rivers and seacoast, and dispersed themselves over the face of the country.

Among the agents employed to hunt them by sea was the renowned Captain Kidd. He had long been a hardy adventurer, a kind of equivocal borderer, half trader, half smuggler, with a tolerable dash of the picaroon. He had traded for some time among the pirates, lurking about the seas in a little rakish, musquito-built vessel, prying into all kinds of old places, as busy as a Mother Cary's chicken in a gale of wind.

This nondescript personage was pitched upon by government as the very man to command a vessel fitted out to cruise against the pirates, since he knew all their haunts and lurking-places: acting upon the shrewd old maxim of "setting a rogue to catch a rogue." Kidd accordingly sailed from New York in the "Adventure" galley, gallantly armed and duly commissioned, and steered his course to the Madeiras, to Bonavista, to Madagascar, and cruised at the entrance of the Red Sea. Instead, however, of making war upon the pirates he turned pirate himself: captured friend or foe; enriched himself with the spoils of a wealthy Indiaman, manned by Moors, though commanded by an Englishman, and having disposed of his prize, had the hardihood to return to Boston, laden with wealth, with a crew of his comrades at his heels.

His fame had preceded him. The alarm was given of the reappearance of this cut-purse of the ocean. Measures were taken for his arrest; but he had time, it is said, to bury

the greater part of his treasures. He even attempted to draw his sword and defend himself when arrested; but was secured and thrown into prison with several of his followers. They were carried to England in a frigate, where they were tried, condemned, and hanged at Execution Dock. Kidd died hard, for the rope with which he was first tied up broke with his weight, and he tumbled to the ground; he was tied up a second time, and effectually; from whence arose the story of his having been twice hanged.

Such is the main outline of Kidd's history; but it has given birth to an innumerable progeny of traditions. The circumstance of his having buried great treasures of gold and jewels after returning from his cruising set the brains of all the good people along the coast in a ferment. There were rumors on rumors of great sums found here and there; sometimes in one part of the country, sometimes in another; of trees and rocks bearing mysterious marks; doubtless indicating the spots where treasure lay hidden. Of coins found with Moorish characters, the plunder of Kidd's eastern prize, but which the common people took for diabolical or magic inscriptions.

Some reported the spoils to have been buried in solitary unsettled places about Plymouth and Cape Cod; many other parts of the eastern coast, also, and various places in Long Island Sound, have been gilded by these rumors, and have been ransacked by adventurous money-diggers.

In all the stories of these enterprises the devil played a conspicuous part. Either he was conciliated by ceremonies and invocations, or some bargain or compact was made with him. Still he was sure to play the money-diggers some slippery trick. Some had succeeded so far as to touch the iron chest which contained the treasure, when some baffling circumstance was sure to take place. Either the earth would fall in and fill up the pit, or some direful noise or apparition would throw the party into a panic and frighten them from the place; and sometimes the devil himself would appear and bear off the prize from their very grasp; and if they visited

the place on the next day, not a trace would be seen of their labors of the preceding night.

Such were the vague rumors which for a long time tantalized without gratifying my curiosity on the interesting subject of these pirate traditions. There is nothing in this world so hard to get at as truth. I sought among my favorite sources of authentic information, the oldest inhabitants, and particularly the old Dutch wives of the province; but though I flatter myself I am better versed than most men in the curious history of my native province, yet for a long time my inquiries were unattended with any substantial result.

At length it happened, one calm day in the latter part of summer, that I was relaxing myself from the toils of severe study by a day's amusement in fishing in those waters which had been the favorite resort of my boyhood. I was in company with several worthy burghers of my native city. Our sport was indifferent; the fish did not bite freely; and we had frequently changed our fishing ground without bettering our luck. We at length anchored close under a ledge of rocky coast, on the eastern side of the island of Mannahatta. It was a still, warm day. The stream whirled and dimpled by us without a wave or even a ripple, and everything was so calm and quiet that it was almost startling when the kingfisher would pitch himself from the branch of some dry tree, and after suspending himself for a moment in the air to take his aim, would souse into the smooth water after his prey. While we were lolling in our boat, half drowsy with the warm stillness of the day and the dullness of our sport, one of our party, a worthy alderman, was overtaken by a slumber, and, as he dozed, suffered the sinker of his drop-line to lie upon the bottom of the river. On waking, he found he had caught something of importance, from the weight; on drawing it to the surface, we were much surprised to find a long pistol of very curious and outlandish fashion, which, from its rusted condition, and its stock being worm-eaten and covered with barnacles, appeared to have been a long time under water. The unexpected appearance of this document of

warfare occasioned much speculation among my pacific companions. One supposed it to have fallen there during the revolutionary war. Another, from the peculiarity of its fashion, attributed it to the voyagers in the earliest days of the settlement; perchance to the renowned Adrian Block, who explored the Sound and discovered Block Island, since so noted for its cheese. But a third, after regarding it for some time, pronounced it to be of veritable Spanish workmanship.

"I'll warrant," said he, "if this pistol could talk it would tell strange stories of hard fights among the Spanish Dons. I've not a doubt but it's a relic of the buccaneers of old times."

"Like enough," said another of the party. "There was Bradish the pirate, who, at the time Lord Bellamont made such a stir after the buccaneers, buried money and jewels somewhere in these parts or on Long Island; and then there was Captain Kidd—"

"Ah, that Kidd was a daring dog," said an iron-faced Cape Cod whaler. "There's a fine old song about him, all to the tune of

' ' My name is Robert Kidd,
As I sailed, as I sailed.'

And it tells how he gained the devil's good graces by burying the Bible:

" ' I had the Bible in my hand,
As I sailed, as I sailed,
And I buried it in the sand,
As I sailed.'

Egad, if this pistol had belonged to him I should set some store by it out of sheer curiosity. Ah, well, there's an odd story I have heard about one Tom Walker, who, they say, dug up some of Kidd's buried money; and as the fish don't seem to bite at present, I'll tell it to you to pass away time."

THE DEVIL AND TOM WALKER

A FEW miles from Boston, in Massachusetts, there is a deep inlet winding several miles into the interior of the country from Charles Bay, and terminating in a thickly-wooded swamp, or morass. On one side of this inlet is a beautiful dark grove; on the opposite side the land rises abruptly from the water's edge, into a high ridge on which grow a few scattered oaks of great age and immense size. It was under one of these gigantic trees, according to old stories, that Kidd the pirate buried his treasure. The inlet allowed a facility to bring the money in a boat secretly and at night to the very foot of the hill. The elevation of the place permitted a good lookout to be kept that no one was at hand, while the remarkable trees formed good landmarks by which the place might easily be found again. The old stories add, moreover, that the devil presided at the hiding of the money, and took it under his guardianship; but this, it is well known, he always does with buried treasure, particularly when it has been ill gotten. Be that as it may, Kidd never returned to recover his wealth; being shortly after seized at Boston, sent out to England, and there hanged for a pirate.

About the year 1727, just at the time when earthquakes were prevalent in New England, and shook many tall sinners down upon their knees, there lived near this place a meager miserly fellow of the name of Tom Walker. He had a wife as miserly as himself; they were so miserly that they even conspired to cheat each other. Whatever the woman could lay hands on she hid away; a hen could not cackle but she was on the alert to secure the new-laid egg. Her husband was continually prying about to detect her secret hoards, and many and fierce were the conflicts that took place about what ought to have been common property. They lived in a for-

lorn-looking house that stood alone and had an air of starvation. A few straggling savin trees, emblems of sterility, grew near it; no smoke ever curled from its chimney; no traveler stopped at its door. A miserable horse, whose ribs were as articulate as the bars of a gridiron, stalked about a field where a thin carpet of moss, scarcely covering the ragged beds of pudding-stone, tantalized and balked his hunger; and sometimes he would lean his head over the fence, look piteously at the passer-by, and seem to petition deliverance from this land of famine. The house and its inmates had altogether a bad name. Tom's wife was a tall termagant, fierce of temper, loud of tongue, and strong of arm. Her voice was often heard in wordy warfare with her husband; and his face sometimes showed signs that their conflicts were not confined to words. No one ventured, however, to interfere between them; the lonely wayfarer shrunk within himself at the horrid clamor and clapper-clawing; eyed the den of discord askance, and hurried on his way, rejoicing, if a bachelor, in his celibacy.

One day that Tom Walker had been to a distant part of the neighborhood, he took what he considered a short cut homeward through the swamp. Like most short cuts, it was an ill-chosen route. The swamp was thickly grown with great gloomy pines and hemlocks, some of them ninety feet high; which made it dark at noonday, and a retreat for all the owls of the neighborhood. It was full of pits and quagmires, partly covered with weeds and mosses, where the green surface often betrayed the traveler into a gulf of black smothering mud; there were also dark and stagnant pools, the abodes of the tadpole, the bullfrog, and the water-snake, and where trunks of pines and hemlocks lay half drowned, half rotting, looking like alligators sleeping in the mire.

Tom had long been picking his way cautiously through this treacherous forest; stepping from tuft to tuft of rushes and roots which afforded precarious footholds among deep sloughs; or pacing carefully, like a cat, along the prostrate trunks of trees; startled now and then by the sudden scream-

ing of the bittern, or the quacking of a wild duck, rising on the wing from some solitary pool. At length he arrived at a piece of firm ground, which ran out like a peninsula into the deep bosom of the swamp. It had been one of the strongholds of the Indians during their wars with the first colonists. Here they had thrown up a kind of fort which they had looked upon as almost impregnable, and had used as a place of refuge for their squaws and children. Nothing remained of the Indian fort but a few embankments gradually sinking to the level of the surrounding earth, and already overgrown in part by oaks and other forest trees, the foliage of which formed a contrast to the dark pines and hemlocks of the swamp.

It was late in the dusk of evening that Tom Walker reached the old fort, and he paused there for a while to rest himself. Any one but he would have felt unwilling to linger in this lonely, melancholy place, for the common people had a bad opinion of it, from the stories handed down from the time of the Indian wars; when it was asserted that the savages held incantations here and made sacrifices to the evil spirit. Tom Walker, however, was not a man to be troubled with any fears of the kind.

He reposed himself for some time on the trunk of a fallen hemlock, listening to the boding cry of the tree-toad, and delving with his walking-staff into a mound of black mould at his feet. As he turned up the soil unconsciously, his staff struck against something hard. He raked it out of the vegetable mould, and lo! a cloven skull with an Indian tomahawk buried deep in it lay before him. The rust on the weapon showed the time that had elapsed since this death blow had been given. It was a dreary memento of the fierce struggle that had taken place in this last foothold of the Indian warriors.

"Humph!" said Tom Walker, as he gave the skull a kick to shake the dirt from it.

"Let that skull alone!" said a gruff voice.

Tom lifted up his eyes and beheld a great black man

seated directly opposite him on the stump of a tree. He was exceedingly surprised, having neither seen nor heard any one approach, and he was still more perplexed on observing, as well as the gathering gloom would permit, that the stranger was neither negro nor Indian. It is true, he was dressed in a rude, half Indian garb, and had a red belt or sash swathed round his body; but his face was neither black nor copper color, but swarthy and dingy and begrimed with soot, as if he had been accustomed to toil among fires and forges. He had a shock of coarse black hair that stood out from his head in all directions; and bore an ax on his shoulder.

He scowled for a moment at Tom with a pair of great red eyes.

"What are you doing in my grounds?" said the black man, with a hoarse growling voice.

"Your grounds?" said Tom, with a sneer; "no more your grounds than mine: they belong to Deacon Peabody."

"Deacon Peabody be d——d," said the stranger, "as I flatter myself he will be, if he does not look more to his own sins and less to his neighbor's. Look yonder, and see how Deacon Peabody is faring."

Tom looked in the direction that the stranger pointed, and beheld one of the great trees, fair and flourishing without, but rotten at the core, and saw that it had been nearly hewn through, so that the first high wind was likely to blow it down. On the bark of the tree was scored the name of Deacon Peabody. He now looked round and found most of the tall trees marked with the names of some great men of the colony, and all more or less scored by the ax. The one on which he had been seated, and which had evidently just been hewn down, bore the name of Crowninshield; and he recollected a mighty rich man of that name, who made a vulgar display of wealth, which it was whispered he had acquired by buccaneering.

"He's just ready for burning!" said the black man, with a growl of triumph. "You see I am likely to have a good stock of firewood for winter."

"But what right have you," said Tom, "to cut down Deacon Peabody's timber?"

"The right of prior claim," said the other. "This woodland belonged to me long before one of your white-faced race put foot upon the soil."

"And pray who are you, if I may be so bold?" said Tom.

"Oh, I go by various names. I am the Wild Huntsman in some countries; the Black Miner in others. In this neighborhood I am known by the name of the Black Woodsman. I am he to whom the red men devoted this spot, and now and then roasted a white man by way of sweet smelling sacrifice. Since the red men have been exterminated by you white savages I amuse myself by presiding at the persecutions of Quakers and Anabaptists; I am the great patron and prompter of slave dealers, and the grand master of the Salem witches."

"The upshot of all which is, that, if I mistake not," said Tom, sturdily, "you are he commonly called Old Scratch."

"The same at your service!" replied the black man, with a half civil nod.

Such was the opening of this interview, according to the old story, though it has almost too familiar an air to be credited. One would think that to meet with such a singular personage in this wild, lonely place would have shaken any man's nerves: but Tom was a hard-minded fellow, not easily daunted, and he had lived so long with a termagant wife that he did not even fear the devil.

It is said that after this commencement they had a long and earnest conversation together, as Tom returned homeward. The black man told him of great sums of money which had been buried by Kidd the pirate, under the oak trees on the high ridge not far from the morass. All these were under his command and protected by his power, so that none could find them but such as propitiated his favor. These he offered to place within Tom Walker's reach, having conceived an especial kindness for him: but they were to be had only on certain conditions. What these conditions were may easily be

surmised, though Tom never disclosed them publicly. They must have been very hard, for he required time to think of them, and he was not a man to stick at trifles where money was in view. When they had reached the edge of the swamp the stranger paused.

"What proof have I that all you have been telling me is true?" said Tom.

"There is my signature," said the black man, pressing his finger on Tom's forehead. So saying, he turned off among the thickets of the swamp, and seemed, as Tom said, to go down, down, down into the earth, until nothing but his head and shoulders could be seen, and so on until he totally disappeared.

When Tom reached home he found the black print of a finger burned, as it were, into his forehead, which nothing could obliterate.

The first news his wife had to tell him was the sudden death of Absalom Crowninshield, the rich buccaneer. It was announced in the papers with the usual flourish that "a great man had fallen in Israel."

Tom recollected the tree which his black friend had just hewn down, and which was ready for burning. "Let the freebooter roast," said Tom, "who cares!" He now felt convinced that all he had heard and seen was no illusion.

He was not prone to let his wife into his confidence; but as this was an uneasy secret he willingly shared it with her. All her avarice was awakened at the mention of hidden gold, and she urged her husband to comply with the black man's terms and secure what would make them wealthy for life. However Tom might have felt disposed to sell himself to the devil, he was determined not to do so to oblige his wife; so he flatly refused out of the mere spirit of contradiction. Many and bitter were the quarrels they had on the subject, but the more she talked the more resolute was Tom not to be damned to please her. At length she determined to drive the bargain on her own account, and, if she succeeded, to keep all the gain to herself.

Being of the same fearless temper as her husband, she set off for the old Indian fort toward the close of a summer's day. She was many hours absent. When she came back she was reserved and sullen in her replies. She spoke something of a black man whom she had met about twilight, hewing at the root of a tall tree. He was sulky, however, and would not come to terms; she was to go again with a propitiatory offering, but what it was she forbore to say.

The next evening she set off again for the swamp, with her apron heavily laden. Tom waited and waited for her, but in vain: midnight came, but she did not make her appearance; morning, noon, night returned, but still she did not come. Tom now grew uneasy for her safety; especially as he found she had carried off in her apron the silver teapot and spoons and every portable article of value. Another night elapsed, another morning came; but no wife. In a word, she was never heard of more.

What was her real fate nobody knows, in consequence of so many pretending to know. It is one of those facts that have become confounded by a variety of historians. Some asserted that she lost her way among the tangled mazes of the swamp and sunk into some pit or slough; others, more uncharitable, hinted that she had eloped with the household booty, and made off to some other province; while others assert that the tempter had decoyed her into a dismal quagmire, on top of which her hat was found lying. In confirmation of this, it was said a great black man with an ax on his shoulder was seen late that very evening coming out of the swamp, carrying a bundle tied in a check apron, with an air of surly triumph.

The most current and probable story, however, observes that Tom Walker grew so anxious about the fate of his wife and his property that he set out at length to seek them both at the Indian fort. During a long summer's afternoon he searched about the gloomy place, but no wife was to be seen. He called her name repeatedly, but she was nowhere to be heard. The bittern alone responded to his voice, as he flew

screaming by; or the bullfrog croaked dolefully from a neighboring pool. At length, it is said, just in the brown hour of twilight, when the owls began to hoot and the bats to flit about, his attention was attracted by the clamor of carrion crows that were hovering about a cypress tree. He looked and beheld a bundle tied in a check apron and hanging in the branches of the tree, with a great vulture perched hard by, as if keeping watch upon it. He leaped with joy, for he recognized his wife's apron, and supposed it to contain the household valuables.

"Let us get hold of the property," said he consolingly to himself, "and we will endeavor to do without the woman."

As he scrambled up the tree the vulture spread its wide wings, and sailed off screaming into the deep shadows of the forest. Tom seized the check apron, but, woful sight! found nothing but a heart and liver tied up in it.

Such, according to the most authentic old story, was all that was to be found of Tom's wife. She had probably attempted to deal with the black man as she had been accustomed to deal with her husband; but though a female scold is generally considered a match for the devil, yet in this instance she appears to have had the worst of it. She must have died game, however, from the part that remained unconquered. Indeed, it is said Tom noticed many prints of cloven feet deeply stamped about the tree, and several handfuls of hair, that looked as if they had been plucked from the coarse black shock of the woodsman. Tom knew his wife's prowess by experience. He shrugged his shoulders as he looked at the signs of a fierce clapper-clawing. "Egad," said he to himself, "Old Scratch must have had a tough time of it!"

Tom consoled himself for the loss of his property by the loss of his wife; for he was a little of a philosopher. He even felt something like gratitude toward the black woodsman, who he considered had done him a kindness. He sought, therefore, to cultivate a further acquaintance with him, but for some time without success; the old black legs played shy,

for whatever people may think, he is not always to be had for calling for; he knows how to play his cards when pretty sure of his game.

At length, it is said, when delay had whetted Tom's eagerness to the quick, and prepared him to agree to anything rather than not gain the promised treasure, he met the black man one evening in his usual woodman dress, with his ax on his shoulder, sauntering along the edge of the swamp, and humming a tune. He affected to receive Tom's advance with great indifference, made brief replies, and went on humming his tune.

By degrees, however, Tom brought him to business, and they began to haggle about the terms on which the former was to have the pirate's treasure. There was one condition which need not be mentioned, being generally understood in all cases where the devil grants favors; but there were others about which, though of less importance, he was inflexibly obstinate. He insisted that the money found through his means should be employed in his service. He proposed, therefore, that Tom should employ it in the black traffic; that is to say, that he should fit out a slave ship. This, however, Tom resolutely refused; he was bad enough, in all conscience, but the devil himself could not tempt him to turn slave dealer.

Finding Tom so squeamish on this point, he did not insist upon it, but proposed instead that he should turn usurer; the devil being extremely anxious for the increase of usurers, looking upon them as his peculiar people.

To this no objections were made, for it was just to Tom's taste.

"You shall open a broker's shop in Boston next month," said the black man.

"I'll do it to-morrow, if you wish," said Tom Walker.

"You shall lend money at two per cent a month."

"Egad, I'll charge four!" replied Tom Walker.

"You shall extort bonds, foreclose mortgages, drive the merchant to bankruptcy—"

"I'll drive him to the d——l," cried Tom Walker, eagerly.

"You are the usurer for my money!" said the black legs, with delight. "When will you want the rhino?"

"This very night."

"Done!" said the devil.

"Done!" said Tom Walker.—So they shook hands, and struck a bargain.

A few days' time saw Tom Walker seated behind his desk in a counting house in Boston. His reputation for a ready-moneyed man, who would lend money out for a good consideration, soon spread abroad. Everybody remembers the days of Governor Belcher, when money was particularly scarce. It was a time of paper credit. The country had been deluged with government bills; the famous Land Bank had been established; there had been a rage for speculating; the people had run mad with schemes for new settlements; for building cities in the wilderness; land jobbers went about with maps of grants, and townships, and Eldorados, lying nobody knew where, but which everybody was ready to purchase. In a word, the great speculating fever which breaks out every now and then in the country had raged to an alarming degree, and everybody was dreaming of making sudden fortunes from nothing. As usual, the fever had subsided; the dream had gone off, and the imaginary fortunes with it; the patients were left in doleful plight, and the whole country resounded with the consequent cry of "hard times."

At this propitious time of public distress did Tom Walker set up as a usurer in Boston. His door was soon thronged by customers. The needy and the adventurous; the gambling speculator; the dreaming land jobber; the thriftless tradesman; the merchant with cracked credit; in short, every one driven to raise money by desperate means and desperate sacrifices hurried to Tom Walker.

Thus Tom was the universal friend of the needy, and he acted like a "friend in need"; that is to say, he always exacted good pay and good security. In proportion to the dis-

tress of the applicant was the hardness of his terms. He accumulated bonds and mortgages; gradually squeezed his customers closer and closer; and sent them, at length, dry as a sponge from his door.

In this way he made money hand over hand; became a rich and mighty man, and exalted his cocked hat upon 'change. He built himself, as usual, a vast house, out of ostentation; but left the greater part of it unfinished and unfurnished out of parsimony. He even set up a carriage in the fullness of his vainglory, though he nearly starved the horses which drew it; and as the ungreased wheels groaned and screeched on the axle-trees, you would have thought you heard the souls of the poor debtors he was squeezing.

As Tom waxed old, however, he grew thoughtful. Having secured the good things of this world, he began to feel anxious about those of the next. He thought with regret on the bargain he had made with his black friend, and set his wits to work to cheat him out of the conditions. He became, therefore, all of a sudden, a violent church-goer. He prayed loudly and strenuously as if heaven were to be taken by force of lungs. Indeed, one might always tell when he had sinned most during the week, by the clamor of his Sunday devotion. The quiet Christians who had been modestly and steadfastly traveling Zionward were struck with self-reproach at seeing themselves so suddenly outstripped in their career by this new-made convert. Tom was as rigid in religious as in money matters; he was a stern supervisor and censurer of his neighbors, and seemed to think every sin entered up to their account became a credit on his own side of the page. He even talked of the expediency of reviving the persecution of Quakers and Anabaptists. In a word, Tom's zeal became as notorious as his riches.

Still, in spite of all this strenuous attention to forms, Tom had a lurking dread that the devil, after all, would have his due. That he might not be taken unawares, therefore, it is said he always carried a small Bible in his coat pocket. He had also a great folio Bible on his counting-house desk, and

would frequently be found reading it when people called on business; on such occasions he would lay his green spectacles on the book, to mark the place, while he turned round to drive some usurious bargain.

Some say that Tom grew a little crack-brained in his old days, and that fancying his end approaching, he had his horse new shod, saddled and bridled, and buried with his feet uppermost; because he supposed that at the last day the world would be turned upside down; in which case he should find his horse standing ready for mounting, and he was determined at the worst to give his old friend a run for it. This, however, is probably a mere old wives' fable. If he really did take such a precaution it was totally superfluous; at least so says the authentic old legend, which closes his story in the following manner:

On one hot afternoon in the dog days, just as a terrible black thunder gust was coming up, Tom sat in his counting-house in his white linen cap and India silk morning-gown. He was on the point of foreclosing a mortgage, by which he would complete the ruin of an unlucky land speculator for whom he had professed the greatest friendship. The poor land jobber begged him to grant a few months' indulgence. Tom had grown testy and irritated and refused another day.

"My family will be ruined and brought upon the parish," said the land jobber.

"Charity begins at home," replied Tom, "I must take care of myself in these hard times."

"You have made so much money out of me," said the speculator.

Tom lost his patience and his piety—"The devil take me," said he, "if I have made a farthing!"

Just then there were three loud knocks at the street door. He stepped out to see who was there. A black man was holding a black horse which neighed and stamped with impatience.

"Tom, you're come for!" said the black fellow, gruffly. Tom shrunk back, but too late. He had left his little Bible

at the bottom of his coat pocket, and his big Bible on the desk buried under the mortgage he was about to foreclose: never was sinner taken more unawares. The black man whisked him like a child astride the horse and away he galloped in the midst of a thunderstorm. The clerks stuck their pens behind their ears and stared after him from the windows. Away went Tom Walker, dashing down the streets; his white cap bobbing up and down; his morning-gown fluttering in the wind, and his steed striking fire out of the pavement at every bound. When the clerks turned to look for the black man he had disappeared.

Tom Walker never returned to foreclose the mortgage. A countryman who lived on the borders of the swamp reported that in the height of the thunder-gust he had heard a great clattering of hoofs and a howling along the road, and that when he ran to the window he just caught sight of a figure, such as I have described, on a horse that galloped like mad across the fields, over the hills, and down into the black hemlock swamp toward the old Indian fort; and that shortly after a thunderbolt fell in that direction which seemed to set the whole forest in a blaze.

The good people of Boston shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders, but had been so much accustomed to witches and goblins and tricks of the devil in all kinds of shapes from the first settlement of the colony that they were not so much horrorstruck as might have been expected. Trustees were appointed to take charge of Tom's effects. There was nothing, however, to administer upon. On searching his coffers all his bonds and mortgages were found reduced to cinders. In place of gold and silver his iron chest was filled with chips and shavings; two skeletons lay in his stable instead of his half-starved horses, and the very next day his great house took fire and was burned to the ground.

Such was the end of Tom Walker and his ill-gotten wealth. Let all griping money-brokers lay this story to heart. The truth of it is not to be doubted. The very hole under the oak trees, from whence he dug Kidd's money, is to be seen

to this day; and the neighboring swamp and old Indian fort is often haunted in stormy nights by a figure on horseback, in a morning-gown and white cap, which is doubtless the troubled spirit of the usurer. In fact, the story has resolved itself into a proverb, and is the origin of that popular saying prevalent throughout New England, of "The Devil and Tom Walker."

Such, as nearly as I can recollect, was the tenor of the tale told by the Cape Cod whaler. There were divers trivial particulars which I have omitted, and which whiled away the morning very pleasantly, until, the time of tide favorable for fishing being passed, it was proposed that we should go to land, and refresh ourselves under the trees, until the noon-tide heat should have abated.

We accordingly landed on a delectable part of the island of Mannahatta, in that shady and embowered tract formerly under dominion of the ancient family of the Hardenbrooks. It was a spot well known to me in the course of the aquatic expeditions of my boyhood. Not far from where we landed was an old Dutch family vault, in the side of a bank, which had been an object of great awe and fable among my school-boy associates. There were several mouldering coffins within; but what gave it a fearful interest with us was its being connected in our minds with the pirate wreck which lay among the rocks of Hell Gate. There were also stories of smuggling connected with it, particularly during a time that this retired spot was owned by a noted burgher called Ready Money Prevost; a man of whom it was whispered that he had many and mysterious dealings with parts beyond seas. All these things, however, had been jumbled together in our minds in that vague way in which such things are mingled up in the tales of boyhood.

While I was musing upon these matters my companions had spread a repast from the contents of our well-stored pannier, and we solaced ourselves during the warm sunny hours of midday under the shade of a broad chestnut, on the cool

grassy carpet that swept down to the water's edge. While lolling on the grass I summoned up the dusky recollections of my boyhood respecting this place, and repeated them like the imperfectly remembered traces of a dream, for the entertainment of my companions. When I had finished, a worthy old burgher, John Josse Vandermoere, the same who once related to me the adventures of Dolph Heyliger, broke silence and observed that he recollected a story about money-digging which occurred in this very neighborhood. As we knew him to be one of the most authentic narrators of the province we begged him to let us have the particulars, and accordingly, while we refreshed ourselves with a clean long pipe of Blase Moore's tobacco, the authentic John Josse Vandermoere related the following tale.

WOLFERT WEBBER ; OR, GOLDEN DREAMS

IN the year of grace one thousand seven hundred and—blank—for I do not remember the precise date; however, it was somewhere in the early part of the last century, there lived in the ancient city of the Manhattoes a worthy burgher, Wolfert Webber by name. He was descended from old Cobus Webber of the Brille in Holland, one of the original settlers, famous for introducing the cultivation of cabbages, and who came over to the province during the protectorship of Oloffte Van Kortlandt, otherwise called the Dreamer.

The field in which Cobus Webber first planted himself and his cabbages had remained ever since in the family, who continued in the same line of husbandry, with that praiseworthy perseverance for which our Dutch burghers are noted. The whole family genius, during several generations, was devoted to the study and development of this one noble vegetable; and to this concentration of intellect

may doubtless be ascribed the prodigious size and renown to which the Webber cabbages attained.

The Webber dynasty continued in uninterrupted succession; and never did a line give more unquestionable proofs of legitimacy. The eldest son succeeded to the looks as well as the territory of his sire; and had the portraits of this line of tranquil potentates been taken, they would have presented a row of heads marvelously resembling in shape and magnitude the vegetables over which they reigned.

The seat of government continued unchanged in the family mansion: a Dutch-built house, with a front, or rather gable-end of yellow brick, tapering to a point, with the customary iron weathercock at the top. Everything about the building bore the air of long-settled ease and security. Flights of martins peopled the little coops nailed against the walls, and swallows built their nests under the eaves; and every one knows that these house-loving birds bring good luck to the dwelling where they take up their abode. In a bright sunny morning in early summer, it was delectable to hear their cheerful notes, as they sported about in the pure, sweet air, chirping forth, as it were, the greatness and prosperity of the Webbers.

Thus quietly and comfortably did this excellent family vegetate under the shade of a mighty buttonwood tree, which by little and little grew so great as entirely to overshadow their palace. The city gradually spread its suburbs round their domain. Houses sprung up to interrupt their prospects. The rural lanes in the vicinity began to grow into the bustle and populousness of streets; in short, with all the habits of rustic life, they began to find themselves the inhabitants of a city. Still, however, they maintained their hereditary character, and hereditary possessions, with all the tenacity of petty German princes in the midst of the empire. Wolfert was the last of the line, and succeeded to the patriarchal bench at the door, under the family tree, and swayed the scepter of his fathers, a kind of rural potentate in the midst of a metropolis.

To share the cares and sweets of sovereignty he had taken unto himself a helpmate, one of that excellent kind called stirring women; that is to say, she was one of those notable little housewives who are always busy when there is nothing to do. Her activity, however, took one particular direction; her whole life seemed devoted to intense knitting; whether at home or abroad, walking or sitting, her needles were continually in motion, and it is even affirmed that by her unwearied industry she very nearly supplied her household with stockings throughout the year. This worthy couple were blessed with one daughter, who was brought up with great tenderness and care; uncommon pains had been taken with her education, so that she could stitch in every variety of way, make all kinds of pickles and preserves, and mark her own name on a sampler. The influence of her taste was seen also in the family garden, where the ornamental began to mingle with the useful; whole rows of fiery marigolds and splendid hollyhocks bordered the cabbage-beds; and gigantic sunflowers lolled their broad, jolly faces over the fences, seeming to ogle most affectionately the passers-by.

Thus reigned and vegetated Wolfert Webber over his paternal acres, peaceably and contentedly. Not but that, like all other sovereigns, he had his occasional cares and vexations. The growth of his native city sometimes caused him annoyance. His little territory gradually became hemmed in by streets and houses, which intercepted air and sunshine. He was now and then subject to the irruptions of the border population that infest the streets of a metropolis, who would sometimes make midnight forays into his dominions, and carry off captive whole platoons of his noblest subjects. Vagrant swine would make a descent, too, now and then, when the gate was left open, and lay all waste before them; and mischievous urchins would often decapitate the illustrious sunflowers, the glory of the garden, as they lolled their heads so fondly over the walls. Still all these were petty grievances, which might now and then ruffle the surface of his mind, as a summer breeze will ruffle the surface of a mill-

pond; but they could not disturb the deep-seated quiet of his soul. He would but seize a trusty staff that stood behind the door, issue suddenly out, and anoint the back of the aggressor, whether pig or urchin, and then return within doors, marvelously refreshed and tranquilized.

The chief cause of anxiety to honest Wolfert, however, was the growing prosperity of the city. The expenses of living doubled and trebled; but he could not double and treble the magnitude of his cabbages; and the number of competitors prevented the increase of price; thus, therefore, while every one around him grew richer, Wolfert grew poorer, and he could not, for the life of him, perceive how the evil was to be remedied.

This growing care, which increased from day to day, had its gradual effect upon our worthy burgher; insomuch, that it at length implanted two or three wrinkles on his brow; things unknown before in the family of the Webbers; and it seemed to pinch up the corners of his cocked hat into an expression of anxiety, totally opposite to the tranquil, broad-brimmed, low-crowned beavers of his illustrious progenitors.

Perhaps even this would not have materially disturbed the serenity of his mind had he had only himself and his wife to care for; but there was his daughter gradually growing to maturity; and all the world knows when daughters begin to ripen no fruit or flower requires so much looking after. I have no talent at describing female charms, else fain would I depict the progress of this little Dutch beauty. How her blue eyes grew deeper and deeper, and her cherry lips redder and redder; and how she ripened and ripened, and rounded and rounded, in the opening breath of sixteen summers, until, in her seventeenth spring, she seemed ready to burst out of her bodice, like a half-blown rosebud.

Ah, well-a-day! could I but show her as she was then, tricked out on a Sunday morning, in the hereditary finery of the old Dutch clothes-press, of which her mother had confided to her the key. The wedding dress of her grandmother, modernized for us with sundry ornaments handed down as

heirlooms in the family. Her pale brown hair smoothed with buttermilk in flat waving lines on each side of her fair forehead. The chain of yellow virgin gold that encircled her neck; the little cross that just rested at the entrance of a soft valley of happiness, as if it would sanctify the place. The—but pooh!—it is not for an old man like me to be prosing about female beauty: suffice it to say Amy had attained her seventeenth year. Long since had her sampler exhibited hearts in couples desperately transfixed with arrows, and true lovers' knots worked in deep blue silk; and it was evident she began to languish for some more interesting occupation than the rearing of sunflowers or pickling of cucumbers.

At this critical period of female existence, when the heart within a damsel's bosom, like its emblem, the miniature which hangs without, is apt to be engrossed by a single image, a new visitor began to make his appearance under the roof of Wolfert Webber. This was Dirk Waldron, the only son of a poor widow, but who could boast of more fathers than any lad in the province; for his mother had had four husbands, and this only child, so that though born in her last wedlock, he might fairly claim to be the tardy fruit of a long course of cultivation. This son of four fathers united the merits and the vigor of his sires. If he had not a great family before him he seemed likely to have a great one after him; for you had only to look at the fresh game-some youth to see that he was formed to be the founder of a mighty race.

This youngster gradually became an intimate visitor of the family. He talked little, but he sat long. He filled the father's pipe when it was empty, gathered up the mother's knitting-needle or ball of worsted when it fell to the ground; stroked the sleek coat of the tortoise-shell cat, and replenished the teapot for the daughter from the bright copper kettle that sung before the fire. All these quiet little offices may seem of trifling import, but when true love is translated into Low Dutch, it is in this way that it eloquently expresses itself. They were not lost upon the Webber family. The winning

youngster found marvelous favor in the eyes of the mother; the tortoise-shell cat, albeit the most staid and demure of her kind, gave indubitable signs of approbation of his visits, the tea-kettle seemed to sing out a cheering note of welcome at his approach, and if the sly glances of the daughter might be rightly read, as she sat bridling and dimpling, and sewing by her mother's side, she was not a whit behind Dame Webber, or grimalkin, or the tea-kettle, in good-will.

Wolfert alone saw nothing of what was going on. Profoundly wrapped up in meditation on the growth of the city and his cabbages, he sat looking in the fire, and puffing his pipe in silence. One night, however, as the gentle Amy, according to custom, lighted her lover to the outer door, and he, according to custom, took his parting salute, the smack resounded so vigorously through the long, silent entry as to startle even the dull ear of Wolfert. He was slowly roused to a new source of anxiety. It had never entered into his head that this mere child, who, as it seemed but the other day had been climbing about his knees, and playing with dolls and baby-houses, could all at once be thinking of love and matrimony. He rubbed his eyes, examined into the fact, and really found that while he had been dreaming of other matters she had actually grown into a woman, and, what was more, had fallen in love. Here were new cares for poor Wolfert. He was a kind father, but he was a prudent man. The young man was a very stirring lad; but then he had neither money nor land. Wolfert's ideas all ran in one channel, and he saw no alternative in case of a marriage but to portion off the young couple with a corner of his cabbage garden, the whole of which was barely sufficient for the support of his family.

Like a prudent father, therefore, he determined to nip this passion in the bud, and forbade the youngster the house, though sorely did it go against his fatherly heart, and many a silent tear did it cause in the bright eye of his daughter. She showed herself, however, a pattern of filial piety and obedience. She never pouted and sulked; she never flew in

the face of parental authority; she never fell into a passion, or fell into hysterics, as many romantic novel-read young ladies would do. Not she, indeed! She was none such heroical rebellious trumpery, I warrant ye. On the contrary, she acquiesced like an obedient daughter; shut the street-door in her lover's face, and if ever she did grant him an interview, it was either out of the kitchen window or over the garden fence.

Wolfert was deeply cogitating these things in his mind, and his brow wrinkled with unusual care, as he wended his way one Saturday afternoon to a rural inn, about two miles from the city. It was a favorite resort of the Dutch part of the community from being always held by a Dutch line of landlords, and retaining an air and relish of the good old times. It was a Dutch-built house, that had probably been a country seat of some opulent burgher in the early time of the settlement. It stood near a point of land called Corlears Hook, which stretches out into the Sound, and against which the tide, at its flux and reflux, sets with extraordinary rapidity. The venerable and somewhat crazy mansion was distinguished from afar by a grove of elms and sycamores that seemed to wave a hospitable invitation, while a few weeping willows with their dank, drooping foliage, resembling falling waters, gave an idea of coolness that rendered it an attractive spot during the heats of summer.

Here, therefore, as I said, resorted many of the old inhabitants of the Manhattoes, where, while some played at the shuffle-board and quoits and ninepins, others smoked a deliberate pipe, and talked over public affairs.

It was on a blustering autumnal afternoon that Wolfert made his visit to the inn. The grove of elms and willows was stripped of its leaves, which whirled in rustling eddies about the fields. The ninepin alley was deserted, for the premature chilliness of the day had driven the company within doors. As it was Saturday afternoon, the habitual club was in session, composed principally of regular Dutch burghers, though mingled occasionally with persons of various char-

acter and country, as is natural in a place of such motley population.

Beside the fireplace, and in a huge leathern-bottomed arm-chair, sat the dictator of this little world, the venerable Rem, or, as it was pronounced, Ramm Rapelye. He was a man of Walloon race, and illustrious for the antiquity of his line, his great-grandmother having been the first white child born in the province. But he was still more illustrious for his wealth and dignity: he had long filled the noble office of alderman, and was a man to whom the governor himself took off his hat. He had maintained possession of the leathern-bottomed chair from time immemorial; and had gradually waxed in bulk as he sat in his seat of government until in the course of years he filled its whole magnitude. His word was decisive with his subjects; for he was so rich a man that he was never expected to support any opinion by argument. The landlord waited on him with peculiar officiousness; not that he paid better than his neighbors, but then the coin of a rich man seems always to be so much more acceptable. The landlord had always a pleasant word and a joke to insinuate in the ear of the august Ramm. It is true, Ramm never laughed, and, indeed, maintained a mastiff-like gravity, and even surliness of aspect; yet he now and then rewarded mine host with a token of approbation, which, though nothing more nor less than a kind of grunt, yet delighted the landlord more than a broad laugh from a poorer man.

"This will be a rough night for the money-diggers," said mine host, as a gust of wind howled round the house and rattled at the windows.

"What, are they at their works again?" said an English half-pay captain, with one eye, who was a frequent attendant at the inn.

"Ay, are they," said the landlord, "and well may they be. They've had luck of late. They say a great pot of money has been dug up in the field just behind Stuyvesant's orchard. Folks think it must have been

buried there in old times by Peter Stuyvesant the Dutch Governor."

"Fudge!" said the one-eyed man of war, as he added a small portion of water to a bottom of brandy.

"Well, you may believe or not, as you please," said mine host, somewhat nettled; "but everybody knows that the old governor buried a great deal of his money at the time of the Dutch troubles, when the English red-coats seized on the province. They say, too, the old gentleman walks; ay, and in the very same dress that he wears in the picture which hangs up in the family house."

"Fudge!" said the half-pay officer.

"Fudge, if you please!—But didn't Corney Van Zandt see him at midnight, stalking about in the meadow with his wooden leg, and a drawn sword in his hand that flashed like fire? And what can he be walking for but because people have been troubling the place where he buried his money in old times?"

Here the landlord was interrupted by several guttural sounds from Ramm Rapelye, betokening that he was laboring with the unusual production of an idea. As he was too great a man to be slighted by a prudent publican, mine host respectfully paused until he should deliver himself. The corpulent frame of this mighty burgher now gave all the symptoms of a volcanic mountain on the point of an eruption. First, there was a certain heaving of the abdomen, not unlike an earthquake; then was emitted a cloud of tobacco smoke from that crater, his mouth; then there was a kind of rattle in the throat, as if the idea were working its way up through a region of phlegm; then there were several disjointed members of a sentence thrown out, ending in a cough; at length his voice forced its way in the slow, but absolute tone of a man who feels the weight of his purse, if not of his ideas; every portion of his speech being marked by a testy puff of tobacco smoke.

"Who talks of old Peter Stuyvesant's walking—puff—Have people no respect for persons?—puff—puff—Peter

Stuyvesant knew better what to do with his money than to bury it—puff—I know the Stuyvesant family—puff—every one of them—puff—not a more respectable family in the province—puff—old standers—puff—warm householders—puff—none of your upstarts—puff—puff—puff.—Don't talk to me of Peter Stuyvesant's walking—puff—puff—puff—puff."

Here the redoubtable Ramm contracted his brow, clasped up his mouth till it wrinkled at each corner, and redoubled his smoking with such vehemence that the cloudy volumes soon wreathed round his head, as the smoke envelops the awful summit of Mount Etna.

A general silence followed the sudden rebuke of this very rich man. The subject, however, was too interesting to be readily abandoned. The conversation soon broke forth again from the lips of Peechy Prauw Van Hook, the chronicler of the club, one of those narrative old men who seem to grow incontinent of words, as they grow old, until their talk flows from them almost involuntarily.

Peechy, who could at any time tell as many stories in an evening as his hearers could digest in a month, now resumed the conversation by affirming that, to his knowledge, money had at different times been dug up in various parts of the island. The lucky persons who had discovered them had always dreamed of them three times beforehand, and what was worthy of remark, these treasures had never been found but by some descendant of the good old Dutch families, which clearly proved that they had been buried by Dutchmen in the olden time.

"Fiddlestick with your Dutchmen!" cried the half-pay officer. "The Dutch had nothing to do with them. They were all buried by Kidd the pirate and his crew."

Here a keynote was touched that roused the whole company. The name of Captain Kidd was like a talisman in those times, and was associated with a thousand marvelous stories.

The half-pay officer was a man of great weight among

the peaceable members of the club, by reason of his military character, and of the gunpowder scenes which, by his own account, he had witnessed.

The golden stories of Kidd, however, were resolutely rivaled by the tales of Peechy Prauw, who, rather than suffer his Dutch progenitors to be eclipsed by a foreign freebooter, enriched every spot in the neighborhood with the hidden wealth of Peter Stuyvesant and his contemporaries.

Not a word of this conversation was lost upon Wolfert Webber. He returned pensively home, full of magnificent ideas of buried riches. The soil of his native island seemed to be turned into gold-dust; and every field teemed with treasure. His head almost reeled at the thought how often he must have heedlessly rambled over places where countless sums lay, scarcely covered by the turf beneath his feet. His mind was in a vertigo with this whirl of new ideas. As he came in sight of the venerable mansion of his forefathers, and the little realm where the Webbers had so long and so contentedly flourished, his gorge rose at the narrowness of his destiny.

"Unlucky Wolfert!" exclaimed he, "others can go to bed and dream themselves into whole mines of wealth; they have but to seize a spade in the morning, and turn up doubloons like potatoes; but thou must dream of hardship, and rise to poverty—must dig thy field from year's end to year's end, and—and yet raise nothing but cabbages!"

Wolfert Webber went to bed with a heavy heart; and it was long before the golden visions that disturbed his brain permitted him to sink into repose. The same visions, however, extended into his sleeping thoughts, and assumed a more definite form. He dreamed that he had discovered an immense treasure in the center of his garden. At every stroke of the spade he laid bare a golden ingot; diamond crosses sparkled out of the dust; bags of money turned up their bellies, corpulent with pieces of eight, or venerable doubloons; and chests, wedged close with moidores, ducats,

and pistareens, yawned before his ravished eyes and vomited forth their glittering contents.

Wolfert awoke a poorer man than ever. He had no heart to go about his daily concerns, which appeared so paltry and profitless; but sat all day long in the chimney-corner, picturing to himself ingots and heaps of gold in the fire. The next night his dream was repeated. He was again in his garden, digging, and laying open stores of hidden wealth. There was something very singular in this repetition. He passed another day of reverie, and though it was cleaning-day, and the house, as usual in Dutch households, completely topsyturvy, yet he sat unmoved amid the general uproar.

The third night he went to bed with a palpitating heart. He put on his red nightcap wrong side outward for good luck. It was deep midnight before his anxious mind could settle itself into sleep. Again the golden dream was repeated, and again he saw his garden teeming with ingots and money-bags.

Wolfert rose the next morning in complete bewilderment. A dream three times repeated was never known to lie; and if so, his fortune was made.

In his agitation he put on his waistcoat with the hind part before, and this was a corroboration of good luck. He no longer doubted that a huge store of money lay buried somewhere in his cabbage-field, coyly waiting to be sought for, and he half repined at having so long been scratching about the surface of the soil, instead of digging to the center.

He took his seat at the breakfast-table full of these speculations; asked his daughter to put a lump of gold into his tea, and on handing his wife a plate of slap-jacks, begged her to help herself to a doubloon.

His grand care now was how to secure this immense treasure without its being known. Instead of working regularly in his grounds in the daytime, he now stole from his bed at night, and with spade and pickax went to work to rip up and dig about his paternal acres, from one end to the other. In a little time the whole garden, which had presented such

a goodly and regular appearance, with its phalanx of cabbages, like a vegetable army in battle array, was reduced to a scene of devastation, while the relentless Wolfert, with nightcap on head and lantern and spade in hand, stalked through the slaughtered ranks, the destroying angel of his own vegetable world.

Every morning bore testimony to the ravages of the preceding night in cabbages of all ages and conditions, from the tender sprout to the full-grown head, piteously rooted from their quiet beds like worthless weeds, and left to wither in the sunshine. It was in vain Wolfert's wife remonstrated; it was in vain his darling daughter wept over the destruction of some favorite marigold. "Thou shalt have gold of another guess-sort," he would cry, chucking her under the chin; "thou shalt have a string of crooked ducats for thy wedding-necklace, my child." His family began really to fear that the poor man's wits were diseased. He muttered in his sleep at night of mines of wealth, of pearls and diamonds and bars of gold. In the daytime he was moody and abstracted, and walked about as if in a trance. Dame Weber held frequent councils with all the old women of the neighborhood, not omitting the parish dominie; scarce an hour in the day but a knot of them might be seen wagging their white caps together round her door, while the poor woman made some piteous recital. The daughter, too, was fain to seek for more frequent consolation from the stolen interviews of her favored swain, Dirk Waldron. The delectable little Dutch songs with which she used to dulcify the house grew less and less frequent, and she would forget her sewing and look wistfully in her father's face as he sat pondering by the fireside. Wolfert caught her eye one day fixed on him thus anxiously, and for a moment was roused from his golden reveries.—"Cheer up, my girl," said he, exultingly, "why dost thou droop?—thou shalt hold up thy head one day with the —— and the Schermerhorns, the Van Hornes, and the Van Dams—the patroon himself shall be glad to get thee for his son!"

Amy shook her head at this vainglorious boast, and was more than ever in doubt of the soundness of the good man's intellect.

In the meantime Wolfert went on digging, but the field was extensive, and as his dream had indicated no precise spot, he had to dig at random. The winter set in before one-tenth of the scene of promise had been explored. The ground became too frozen and the nights too cold for the labors of the spade. No sooner, however, did the returning warmth of spring loosen the soil, and the small frogs begin to pipe in the meadows, but Wolfert resumed his labors with renovated zeal. Still, however, the hours of industry were reversed. Instead of working cheerily all day, planting and setting out his vegetables, he remained thoughtfully idle, until the shades of night summoned him to his secret labors. In this way he continued to dig from night to night, and week to week, and month to month, but not a stiver did he find. On the contrary, the more he digged the poorer he grew. The rich soil of his garden was digged away, and the sand and gravel from beneath were thrown to the surface, until the whole field presented an aspect of sandy barrenness.

In the meantime the seasons gradually rolled on. The little frogs that had piped in the meadows in early spring, croaked as bullfrogs in the brooks during the summer heats, and then sunk into silence. The peach tree budded, blossomed, and bore its fruit. The swallows and martins came, twittered about the roof, built their nests, reared their young, held their congress along the eaves, and then winged their flight in search of another spring. The caterpillar spun its winding-sheet, dangled in it from the great buttonwood tree that shaded the house, turned into a moth, fluttered with the last sunshine of summer, and disappeared; and finally the leaves of the buttonwood tree turned yellow, then brown, then rustled one by one to the ground, and whirling about in little eddies of wind and dust, whispered that winter was at hand.

Wolfert gradually awoke from his dream of wealth as the year declined. He had reared no crop to supply the wants of his household during the sterility of winter. The season was long and severe, and for the first time the family was really straitened in its comforts. By degrees a revulsion of thought took place in Wolfert's mind, common to those whose golden dreams have been disturbed by pinching realities. The idea gradually stole upon him that he should come to want. He already considered himself one of the most unfortunate men in the province, having lost such an incalculable amount of undiscovered treasure, and now, when thousands of pounds had eluded his search, to be perplexed for shillings and pence was cruel in the extreme.

Haggard care gathered about his brow; he went about with a money-seeking air, his eyes bent downward into the dust, and carrying his hands in his pockets, as men are apt to do when they have nothing else to put into them. He could not even pass the city almshouse without giving it a rueful glance, as if destined to be his future abode.

The strangeness of his conduct and of his looks occasioned much speculation and remark. For a long time he was suspected of being crazy, and then everybody pitied him; at length it began to be suspected that he was poor, and then everybody avoided him.

The rich old burghers of his acquaintance met him outside of the door when he called, entertained him hospitably on the threshold, pressed him warmly by the hand on parting, shook their heads as he walked away, with the kind-hearted expression of "poor Wolfert," and turned a corner nimbly, if by chance they saw him approaching as they walked the streets. Even the barber and cobbler of the neighborhood, and a tattered tailor in an alley hard by, three of the poorest and merriest rogues in the world, eyed him with that abundant sympathy which usually attends a lack of means; and there is not a doubt but their pockets would have been at his command, only that they happened to be empty.

Thus everybody deserted the Webber mansion, as if pov-

erty were contagious, like the plague; everybody but honest Dirk Waldron, who still kept up his stolen visits to the daughter, and indeed seemed to wax more affectionate as the fortunes of his mistress were on the wane.

Many months had elapsed since Wolfert had frequented his old resort, the rural inn. He was taking a long lonely walk one Saturday afternoon, musing over his wants and disappointments, when his feet took instinctively their wonted direction, and on awaking out of a reverie he found himself before the door of the inn. For some moments he hesitated whether to enter, but his heart yearned for companionship; and where can a ruined man find better companionship than at a tavern, where there is neither sober example nor sober advice to put him out of countenance?

Wolfert found several of the old frequenters of the tavern at their usual posts, and seated in their usual places; but one was missing, the great Ramm Rapelye, who for many years had filled the chair of state. His place was supplied by a stranger, who seemed, however, completely at home in the chair and the tavern. He was rather under-size, but deep-chested, square, and muscular. His broad shoulders, double joints, and bow-knees, gave tokens of prodigious strength. His face was dark and weather-beaten; a deep scar, as if from the slash of a cutlass, had almost divided his nose, and made a gash in his upper lip through which his teeth shone like a bulldog's. A mass of iron-gray hair gave a grizzly finish to his hard-favored visage. His dress was of an amphibious character. He wore an old hat edged with tarnished lace, and cocked in martial style, on one side of his head; a rusty blue military coat with brass buttons, and a wide pair of short petticoat trousers, or rather breeches, for they were gathered up at the knees. He ordered everybody about him with an authoritative air; talked in a brattling voice, that sounded like the crackling of thorns under a pot; damned the landlord and servants with perfect impunity, and was waited upon with greater obsequiousness than had ever been shown to the mighty Ramm himself.

Wolfert's curiosity was awakened to know who and what was this stranger who had thus usurped absolute sway in this ancient domain. He could get nothing, however, but vague information. Peechy Prauw took him aside, into a remote corner of the hall, and there in an under-vioce, and with great caution, imparted to him all that he knew on the subject. The inn had been aroused several months before, on a dark stormy night, by repeated long shouts, that seemed like the howlings of a wolf. They came from the water-side; and at length were distinguished to be hailing the house in the seafaring manner. "House-a-hoy!" The landlord turned out with his head-waiter, tapster, holster, and errand boy—that is to say, with his old negro Cuff. On approaching the place from whence the voice proceeded, they found this amphibious-looking personage at the water's edge, quite alone, and seated on a great oaken sea-chest. How he came there, whether he had been set on shore from some boat, or had floated to land on his chest, nobody could tell, for he did not seem disposed to answer questions, and there was something in his looks and manners that put a stop to all questioning. Suffice it to say, he took possession of a corner room of the inn, to which his chest was removed with great difficulty. Here he had remained ever since, keeping about the inn and its vicinity. Sometimes, it is true, he disappeared for one, two, or three days at a time, going and returning without giving any notice or account of his movements. He always appeared to have plenty of money, though often of very strange, outlandish coinage; and he regularly paid his bill every evening before turning in.

He had fitted up his room to his own fancy, having slung a hammock from the ceiling instead of a bed, and decorated the walls with rusty pistols and cutlasses of foreign workmanship. A great part of his time was passed in this room, seated by the window, which commanded a wide view of the Sound, a short old-fashioned pipe in his mouth, a glass of rum toddy at his elbow, and a pocket telescope in his hand, with which he reconnoitered every boat that moved upon the

water. Large square-rigged vessels seemed to excite but little attention; but the moment he descried anything with a shoulder-of-mutton sail, or that a barge, or yawl, or jolly-boat hove in sight, up went the telescope, and he examined it with the most scrupulous attention.

All this might have passed without much notice, for in those times the province was so much the resort of adventurers of all characters and climes that any oddity in dress or behavior attracted but little attention. But in a little while this strange sea monster, thus strangely cast up on dry land, began to encroach upon the long-established customs and customers of the place; to interfere in a dictatorial manner in the affairs of the ninepin alley and the barroom, until in the end he usurped an absolute command over the little inn. It was in vain to attempt to withstand his authority. He was not exactly quarrelsome, but boisterous and peremptory, like one accustomed to tyrannize on a quarter-deck; and there was a dare-devil air about everything he said and did that inspired a wariness in all bystanders. Even the half-pay officer, so long the hero of the club, was soon silenced by him; and the quiet burghers stared with wonder at seeing their inflammable man of war so readily and quietly extinguished.

And then the tales that he would tell were enough to make a peaceable man's hair stand on end. There was not a sea fight or marauding or free-booting adventure that had happened within the last twenty years but he seemed perfectly versed in it. He delighted to talk of the exploits of the buccaneers in the West Indies and on the Spanish Main. How his eyes would glisten as he described the waylaying of treasure ships, the desperate fights, yardarm and yardarm—broadside and broadside—the boarding and capturing of large Spanish galleons; with what chuckling relish would he describe the descent upon some rich Spanish colony; the rifling of a church; the sacking of a convent! You would have thought you heard some gormandizer dilating upon the roasting of a savory goose at Michaelmas as he described the

roasting of some Spanish Don to make him discover his treasure—a detail given with a minuteness that made every rich old burgher present turn uncomfortably in his chair. All this would be told with infinite glee, as if he considered it an excellent joke; and then he would give such a tyrannical leer in the face of his next neighbor that the poor man would be fain to laugh out of sheer faint-heartedness. If any one, however, pretended to contradict him in any of his stories he was on fire in an instant. His very cocked hat assumed a momentary fierceness, and seemed to resent the contradiction. —“How the devil should you know as well as I! I tell you it was as I say!” and he would at the same time let slip a broadside of thundering oaths and tremendous sea phrases, such as had never been heard before within those peaceful walls.

Indeed, the worthy burghers began to surmise that he knew more of these stories than mere hearsay. Day after day their conjectures concerning him grew more and more wild and fearful. The strangeness of his manners, the mystery that surrounded him, all made him something incomprehensible in their eyes. He was a kind of monster of the deep to them—he was a merman—he was behemoth—he was leviathan—in short, they knew not what he was.

The domineering spirit of this boisterous sea urchin at length grew quite intolerable. He was no respecter of persons; he contradicted the richest burghers without hesitation; he took possession of the sacred elbow chair, which time out of mind had been the seat of sovereignty of the illustrious Ramm Rapelye. Nay, he even went so far in one of his rough jocular moods as to slap that mighty burgher on the back, drink his toddy and wink in his face, a thing scarcely to be believed. From this time Ramm Rapelye appeared no more at the inn; his example was followed by several of the most eminent customers, who were too rich to tolerate being bullied out of their opinions, or being obliged to laugh at another man's jokes. The landlord was almost in despair, but he knew not how to get rid of this sea monster

and his sea-chest, which seemed to have grown like fixtures or excrescences on his establishment.

Such was the account whispered cautiously in Wolfert's ear, by the narrator, Peechy Prauw, as he held him by the button in a corner of the hall, casting a wary glance now and then toward the door of the barroom, lest he should be overheard by the terrible hero of his tale.

Wolfert took his seat in a remote part of the room in silence; impressed with profound awe of this unknown so versed in freebooting history. It was to him a wonderful instance of the revolutions of mighty empires, to find the venerable Ramm Rapelye thus ousted from the throne; a rugged tarpaulin dictating from his elbow chair, hectoring the patriarchs, and filling this tranquil little realm with brawl and bravado.

The stranger was on this evening in a more than usually communicative mood, and was narrating a number of astounding stories of plunderings and burnings upon the high seas. He dwelt upon them with peculiar relish, heightening the frightful particulars in proportion to their effect on his peaceful auditors. He gave a long swaggering detail of the capture of a Spanish merchantman. She was laying becalmed during a long summer's day, just off from an island which was one of the lurking places of the pirates. They had reconnoitered her with their spyglasses from the shore, and ascertained her character and force. At night a picked crew of daring fellows set off for her in a whale boat. They approached with muffled oars, as she lay rocking idly with the undulations of the sea and her sails flapping against the masts. They were close under her stern before the guard on deck was aware of their approach. The alarm was given; the pirates threw hand grenades on deck and sprang up the main-chains sword in hand.

The crew flew to arms, but in great confusion; some were shot down, others took refuge in the tops; others were driven overboard and drowned; while others fought hand to hand from the main deck to the quarter deck, disputing gallantly

every inch of ground. There were three Spanish gentlemen on board with their ladies, who made the most desperate resistance; they defended the companion-way, cut down several of their assailants, and fought like very devils, for they were maddened by the shrieks of the ladies from the cabin. One of the Dons was old and soon dispatched. The other two kept their ground vigorously, even though the captain of the pirates was among their assailants. Just then there was a shout of victory from the main deck. "The ship is ours!" cried the pirates.

One of the Dons immediately dropped his sword and surrendered; the other, who was a hot-headed youngster, and just married, gave the captain a slash in the face that laid all open. The captain just made out to articulate the words "no quarter."

"And what did they do with their prisoners?" said Peechy Prauw, eagerly.

"Threw them all overboard!" said the merman.

A dead pause followed this reply. Peechy Prauw shrunk quietly back like a man who had unwarily stolen upon the lair of a sleeping lion. The honest burghers cast fearful glances at the deep scar slashed across the visage of the stranger, and moved their chairs a little further off. The seaman, however, smoked on without moving a muscle, as though he either did not perceive or did not regard the unfavorable effect he had produced upon his hearers.

The half-pay officer was the first to break the silence; for he was continually tempted to make ineffectual head against this tyrant of the seas, and to regain his lost consequence in the eyes of his ancient companions. He now tried to match the gunpowder tales of the stranger by others equally tremendous. Kidd, as usual, was his hero, concerning whom he seemed to have picked up many of the floating traditions of the province. The seaman had always evinced a settled pique against the red-faced warrior. On this occasion he listened with peculiar impatience. He sat with one arm akimbo, the other elbow on a table, the hand holding on to

the small pipe he was pettishly puffing; his legs crossed, drumming with one foot on the ground and casting every now and then the side glance of a basilisk at the prosing captain. At length the latter spoke of Kidd's having ascended the Hudson with some of his crew, to land his plunder in secrecy.

"Kidd up the Hudson!" burst forth the seaman, with a tremendous oath; "Kidd never was up the Hudson!"

"I tell you he was," said the other. "Ay, and they say he buried a quantity of treasure on the little flat that runs out into the river, called the Devil's Dans Kammer."

"The Devil's Dans Kammer in your teeth!" cried the seaman. "I tell you, Kidd never was up the Hudson—what a plague do you know of Kidd and his haunts?"

"What do I know?" echoed the half-pay officer; "why, I was in London at the time of his trial, ay, and I had the pleasure of seeing him hanged at Execution Dock."

"Then, sir, let me tell you that you saw as pretty a fellow hanged as ever trod shoe leather. Ay!" putting his face nearer to that of the officer, "and there was many a coward looked on that might much better have swung in his stead."

The half-pay officer was silenced; but the indignation thus pent up in his bosom glowed with intense vehemence in his single eye, which kindled like a coal.

Peechy Prauw, who never could remain silent, now took up the word, and in a pacifying tone observed that the gentleman certainly was in the right. Kidd never did bury money up the Hudson, nor indeed in any of those parts, though many affirm the fact. It was Bradish and others of the buccaneers who had buried money, some said in Turtle Bay, others on Long Island, others in the neighborhood of Hell Gate. Indeed, added he, I recollect an adventure of Mud Sam, the negro fisherman, many years ago, which some think had something to do with the buccaneers. As we are all friends here, and as it will go no further, I'll tell it to you.

"Upon a dark night many years ago, as Sam was returning from fishing in Hell Gate—"

Here the story was nipped in the bud by a sudden movement from the unknown, who, laying his iron fist on the table, knuckles downward, with a quiet force that indented the very boards, and looking grimly over his shoulder, with the grin of an angry bear. "Heark'ee, neighbor," said he, with significant nodding of the head, "you'd better let the buccaneers and their money alone—they're not for old men and old women to meddle with. They fought hard for their money, they gave body and soul for it, and wherever it lies buried, depend upon it he must have a tug with the devil who gets it."

This sudden explosion was succeeded by a blank silence throughout the room. Peechy Prauw shrunk within himself, and even the red faced officer turned pale. Wolfert, who, from a dark corner of the room, had listened with intense eagerness to all this talk about buried treasure, looked with mingled awe and reverence on this bold buccaneer, for such he really suspected him to be. There was a chinking of gold and a sparkling of jewels in all his stories about the Spanish Main that gave a value to every period, and Wolfert would have given anything for the rummaging of the ponderous sea-chest, which his imagination crammed full of golden chalices and crucifixes and jolly round bags of doubloons.

The dead stillness that had fallen upon the company was at length interrupted by the stranger, who pulled out a prodigious watch of curious and ancient workmanship, and which in Wolfert's eyes had a decidedly Spanish look. On touching a spring it struck ten o'clock; upon which the sailor called for his reckoning, and having paid it out of a handful of outlandish coin, he drank off the remainder of his beverage, and, without taking leave of any one, rolled out of the room, muttering to himself as he stamped upstairs to his chamber.

It was some time before the company could recover from the silence into which they had been thrown. The very footsteps of the stranger, which were heard now and then as he traversed his chamber, inspired awe.

Still the conversation in which they had been engaged was too interesting not to be resumed. A heavy thunder-gust had gathered up unnoticed while they were lost in talk, and the torrents of rain that fell forbade all thoughts of setting off for home until the storm should subside. They drew nearer together, therefore, and entreated the worthy Peechy Prauw to continue the tale which had been so discourteously interrupted. He readily complied, whispering, however, in a tone scarcely above his breath, and drowned occasionally by the rolling of the thunder; and he would pause every now and then, and listen with evident awe, as he heard the heavy footsteps of the stranger pacing overhead.

The following is the purport of his story.

THE ADVENTURE OF SAM, THE BLACK FISHERMAN

COMMONLY DENOMINATED MUD SAM

EVERYBODY knows Mud Sam, the old negro fisherman who has fished about the Sound for the last twenty or thirty years. Well, it is now many years since that Sam, who was then a young fellow, and worked on the farm of Killian Suydam on Long Island, having finished his work early, was fishing, one still summer evening, just about the neighborhood of Hell Gate. He was in a light skiff, and being well acquainted with the currents and eddies, he had been able to shift his station with the shifting of the tide, from the Hen and Chickens to the Hog's Back, and from the Hog's Back to the Pot, and from the Pot to the Frying-pan; but in the eagerness of his sport Sam did not see that the tide was rapidly ebbing, until the roaring of the whirlpools and rapids warned him of his danger, and he had some difficulty in shooting his skiff from among the rocks and breakers, and getting to the point of Blackwell's Island. Here he cast



DEATH OF THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER.

Irving, Vol. Two, p. 548.

anchor for some time, waiting the turn of the tide to enable him to return homeward. As the night set in it grew blustering and gusty. Dark clouds came bundling up in the west; and now and then a growl of thunder or a flash of lightning told that a summer storm was at hand. Sam pulled over, therefore, under the lee of Manhattan Island, and coasting along came to a snug nook, just under a steep beetling rock, where he fastened his skiff to the root of a tree that shot out from a cleft and spread its broad branches like a canopy over the water. The gust came scouring along; the wind threw up the river in white surges; the rain rattled among the leaves, the thunder bellowed worse than that which is now bellowing, the lightning seemed to lick up the surges of the stream; but Sam, snugly sheltered under rock and tree, lay crouched in his skiff, rocking upon the billows until he fell asleep. When he awoke all was quiet. The gust had passed away, and only now and then a faint gleam of lightning in the east showed which way it had gone. The night was dark and moonless; and from the state of the tide Sam concluded it was near midnight. He was on the point of making loose his skiff to return homeward, when he saw a light gleaming along the water from a distance, which seemed rapidly approaching. As it drew near he perceived it came from a lantern in the bow of a boat which was gliding along under shadow of the land. It pulled up in a small cove, close to where he was. A man jumped on shore, and searching about with the lantern exclaimed, "This is the place—here's the iron ring." The boat was then made fast, and the man, returning on board, assisted his comrades in conveying something heavy on shore. As the light gleamed among them, Sam saw that they were five stout, desperate-looking fellows, in red woolen caps, with a leader in a three-cornered hat, and that some of them were armed with dirks, or long knives, and pistols. They talked low to one another, and occasionally in some outlandish tongue which he could not understand.

On landing they made their way among the bushes, tak-

ing turns to relieve each other in lugging their burden up the rocky bank. Sam's curiosity was now fully aroused, so leaving his skiff he clambered silently up the ridge that overlooked their path. They had stopped to rest for a moment, and the leader was looking about among the bushes with his lantern. "Have you brought the spades?" said one. "They are here," replied another, who had them on his shoulder. "We must dig deep, where there will be no risk of discovery," said a third.

A cold chill ran through Sam's veins. He fancied he saw before him a gang of murderers, about to bury their victim. His knees smote together. In his agitation he shook the branch of a tree with which he was supporting himself as he looked over the edge of the cliff.

"What's that?" cried one of the gang. "Some one stirs among the bushes!"

The lantern was held up in the direction of the noise. One of the red-caps cocked a pistol, and pointed it toward the very place where Sam was standing. He stood motionless—breathless; expecting the next moment to be his last. Fortunately his dingy complexion was in his favor and made no glare among the leaves.

"'Tis no one," said the man with the lantern. "What a plague; you would not fire off your pistol and alarm the country."

The pistol was uncocked; the burden was resumed, and the party slowly toiled along the bank. Sam watched them as they went; the light sending back fitful gleams through the dripping bushes, and it was not till they were fairly out of sight that he ventured to draw breath freely. He now thought of getting back to his boat and making his escape out of the reach of such dangerous neighbors; but curiosity was all-powerful with poor Sam. He hesitated and lingered and listened. By and by he heard the strokes of spades.

"They are digging the grave!" said he to himself; and the cold sweat started upon his forehead. Every stroke of a spade, as it sounded through the silent groves, went to his

heart; it was evident there was as little noise made as possible; everything had an air of mystery and secrecy. Sam had a great relish for the horrible—a tale of murder was a treat for him; and he was a constant attendant at executions. He could not, therefore, resist an impulse, in spite of every danger, to steal nearer, and overlook the villains at their work. He crawled along cautiously, therefore, inch by inch; stepping with the utmost care among the dry leaves, lest their rustling should betray him. He came at length to where a steep rock intervened between him and the gang; he saw the light of their lantern shining up against the branches of the trees on the other side. Sam slowly and silently clambered up the surface of the rock, and raising his head above its naked edge, beheld the villains immediately below him, and so near that though he dreaded discovery he dared not withdraw lest the least movement should be heard. In this way he remained, with his round black face peering above the edge of the rock, like the sun just emerging above the edge of the horizon, or the round-cheeked moon on the dial of a clock.

The red-caps had nearly finished their work; the grave was filled up, and they were carefully replacing the turf. This done, they scattered dry leaves over the place. “And now,” said the leader, “I defy the devil himself to find it out.”

“The murderers!” exclaimed Sam, involuntarily.

The whole gang started, and looking up beheld the round, black head of Sam just above them. His white eyes strained half out of their orbits; his white teeth chattering, and his whole visage shining with cold perspiration.

“We’re discovered!” cried one.

“Down with him!” cried another.

Sam heard the cocking of a pistol, but did not pause for the report. He scrambled over rock and stone, through bush and brier; rolled down banks like a hedge-hog; scrambled up others like a catamount. In every direction he heard some one or other of the gang hemming him in. At length he reached the rocky ridge along the river; one of the red-caps

was hard behind him. A steep rock like a wall rose directly in his way; it seemed to cut off all retreat, when he espied the strong cord-like branch of a grape-vine, reaching half way down it. He sprang at it with the force of a desperate man, seized it with both hands, and, being young and agile, succeeded in swinging himself to the summit of the cliff. Here he stood in full relief against the sky, when the red-cap cocked his pistol and fired. The ball whistled by Sam's head. With the lucky thought of a man in an emergency, he uttered a yell, fell to the ground, and detached at the same time a fragment of the rock, which tumbled with a loud splash into the river.

"I've done his business," said the red-cap to one or two of his comrades as they arrived panting. "He'll tell no tales, except to the fishes in the river."

His pursuers now turned off to meet their companions. Sam, sliding silently down the surface of the rock, let himself quietly into his skiff, cast loose the fastening, and abandoned himself to the rapid current, which in that place runs like a mill-stream, and soon swept him off from the neighborhood. It was not, however, until he had drifted a great distance that he ventured to ply his oars; when he made his skiff dart like an arrow through the strait of Hell Gate, never heeding the danger of Pot, Frying-pan, or Hog's Back itself; nor did he feel himself thoroughly secure until safely nestled in bed in the cockloft of the ancient farmhouse of the Suydams.

Here the worthy Peechy paused to take breath and to take a sip of the gossip tankard that stood at his elbow. His auditors remained with open mouths and outstretched necks, gaping like a nest of swallows for an additional mouthful.

"And is that all?" exclaimed the half-pay officer.

"That's all that belongs to the story," said Peechy Praww.

"And did Sam never find out what was buried by the red-caps?" said Wolfert, eagerly; whose mind was haunted by nothing but ingots and doubloons.

"Not that I know of; he had no time to spare from his work; and, to tell the truth, he did not like to run the risk

of another race among the rocks. Besides, how should he recollect the spot where the grave had been digged? everything would look different by daylight. And then, where was the use of looking for a dead body, when there was no chance of hanging the murderers?"

"Ay, but are you sure it was a dead body they buried?" said Wolfert.

"To be sure," cried Peechy Prauw, exultingly. "Does it not haunt in the neighborhood to this very day?"

"Haunts!" exclaimed several of the party, opening their eyes still wider and edging their chairs still closer.

"Ay, haunts," repeated Peechy; "has none of you heard of father red-cap that haunts the old burned farmhouse in the woods, on the border of the Sound, near Hell Gate?"

"Oh, to be sure, I've heard tell of something of the kind, but then I took it for some old wives' fable."

"Old wives' fable or not," said Peechy Prauw, "that farmhouse stands hard by the very spot. It's been unoccupied time out of mind, and stands in a wild, lonely part of the coast; but those who fish in the neighborhood have often heard strange noises there; and lights have been seen about the wood at night; and an old fellow in a red cap has been seen at the windows more than once, which people take to be the ghost of the body that was buried there. Once upon a time three soldiers took shelter in the building for the night, and rummaged it from top to bottom, when they found old father red-cap astride of a cider-barrel in the cellar, with a jug in one hand and a goblet in the other. He offered them a drink out of his goblet, but just as one of the soldiers was putting it to his mouth—Whew! a flash of fire blazed through the cellar, blinded every mother's son of them for several minutes, and when they recovered their eyesight, jug, goblet, and red-cap had vanished, and nothing but the empty cider-barrel remained."

Here the half-pay officer, who was growing very muzzy and sleepy, and nodding over his liquor, with half-extinguished eye, suddenly gleamed up like an expiring rushlight.

"That's all humbug!" said he, as Peechy finished his last story.

"Well, I don't vouch for the truth of it myself," said Peechy Prauw, "though all the world knows that there's something strange about the house and grounds; but as to the story of Mud Sam, I believe it just as well as if it had happened to myself."

The deep interest taken in this conversation by the company had made them unconscious of the uproar that prevailed abroad among the elements, when suddenly they were all electrified by a tremendous clap of thunder. A lumbering crash followed instantaneously that made the building shake to its foundation. All started from their seats, imagining it the shock of an earthquake, or that old father red-cap was coming among them in all his terrors. They listened for a moment, but only heard the rain pelting against the windows, and the wind howling among the trees. The explosion was soon explained by the apparition of an old negro's bald head thrust in at the door, his white goggle eyes contrasting with his jetty poll, which was wet with rain and shone like a bottle. In a jargon but half intelligible he announced that the kitchen chimney had been struck with lightning.

A sullen pause of the storm, which now rose and sunk in gusts, produced a momentary stillness. In this interval the report of a musket was heard, and a long shout, almost like a yell, resounded from the shore. Every one crowded to the window; another musket shot was heard, and another long shout that mingled wildly with a rising blast of wind. It seemed as if the cry came up from the bosom of the waters; for though incessant flashes of lightning spread a light about the shore, no one was to be seen.

Suddenly the window of the room overhead was opened, and a loud halloo uttered by the mysterious stranger. Several hailings passed from one party to the other, but in a language which none of the company in the bar-room could understand; and presently they heard the window closed,

and a great noise overhead as if all the furniture were pulled and hauled about the room. The negro servant was summoned, and shortly after was seen assisting the veteran to lug the ponderous sea-chest downstairs.

The landlord was in amazement. "What, you are not going on the water in such a storm?"

"Storm!" said the other, scornfully, "do you call such a sputter of weather a storm?"

"You'll get drenched to the skin—You'll catch your death!" said Peechy Prauw, affectionately.

"Thunder and lightning!" exclaimed the merman, "don't preach about weather to a man that has cruised in whirlwinds and tornadoes."

The obsequious Peechy was again struck dumb. The voice from the water was again heard in a tone of impatience; the bystanders stared with redoubled awe at this man of storms, who seemed to have come up out of the deep and to be called back to it again. As, with the assistance of the negro, he slowly bore his ponderous sea-chest toward the shore, they eyed it with a superstitious feeling; half doubting whether he were not really about to embark upon it, and launch forth upon the wild waves. They followed him at a distance with a lantern.

"Douse the light!" roared the hoarse voice from the water. "No one wants lights here!"

"Thunder and lightning!" exclaimed the veteran; "back to the house with you!"

Wolfert and his companions shrunk back in dismay. Still their curiosity would not allow them entirely to withdraw. A long sheet of lightning now flickered across the waves, and discovered a boat, filled with men, just under a rocky point, rising and sinking with the heaving surges, and swashing the water at every heave. It was with difficulty held to the rocks by a boat hook, for the current rushed furiously round the point. The veteran hoisted one end of the lumbering sea-chest on the gunwale of the boat; he seized the handle at the other end to lift it in, when the motion propelled the

boat from the shore; the chest slipped off from the gunwale, sunk into the waves, and pulled the veteran headlong after it. A loud shriek was uttered by all on shore, and a volley of execrations by those on board; but boat and man were hurried away by the rushing swiftness of the tide. A pitchy darkness succeeded; Wolfert Webber indeed fancied that he distinguished a cry for help, and that he beheld the drowning man beckoning for assistance; but when the lightning again gleamed along the water all was drear and void. Neither man nor boat was to be seen; nothing but the dashing and weltering of the waves as they hurried past.

The company returned to the tavern, for they could not leave it before the storm should subside. They resumed their seats and gazed on each other with dismay. The whole transaction had not occupied five minutes, and not a dozen words had been spoken. When they looked at the oaken chair they could scarcely realize the fact that the strange being who had so lately tenanted it, full of life and herculean vigor, should already be a corpse. There was the very glass he had just drunk from; there lay the ashes from the pipe which he had smoked as it were with his last breath. As the worthy burghers pondered on these things, they felt a terrible conviction of the uncertainty of human existence, and each felt as if the ground on which he stood was rendered less stable by this awful example.

As, however, the most of the company were possessed of that valuable philosophy which enables a man to bear up with fortitude against the misfortunes of his neighbors, they soon managed to console themselves for the tragic end of the veteran. The landlord was happy that the poor dear man had paid his reckoning before he went.

"He came in a storm, and he went in a storm; he came in the night, and he went in the night; he came nobody knows from whence, and he has gone nobody knows where. For aught I know he has gone to sea once more on his chest and may land to bother some people on the other side of the world! Though it's a thousand pities," added the

landlord, "if he has gone to Davy Jones that he had not left his sea-chest behind him."

"The sea-chest! St. Nicholas preserve us!" said Peechy Prauw. "I'd not have had that sea-chest in the house for any money; I'll warrant he'd come racketing after it at nights, and making a haunted house of the inn. And as to his going to sea on his chest, I recollect what happened to Skipper Onderdonk's ship on his voyage from Amsterdam.

"The boatswain died during a storm, so they wrapped him up in a sheet, and put him in his own sea-chest and threw him overboard; but they neglected in their hurry-scurry to say prayers over him—and the storm raged and roared louder than ever, and they saw the dead man seated in his chest, with his shroud for a sail, coming hard after the ship; and the sea breaking before him in great sprays like fire, and there they kept scudding day after day and night after night, expecting every moment to go to wreck; and every night they saw the dead boatswain in his sea-chest trying to get up with them, and they heard his whistle above the blasts of wind, and he seemed to send great seas mountain high after them, that would have swamped the ship if they had not put up the dead lights. And so it went on till they lost sight of him in the fogs of Newfoundland, and supposed he had veered ship and stood for Dead Man's Isle. So much for burying a man at sea without saying prayers over him."

The thunder gust which had hitherto detained the company was now at an end. The cuckoo clock in the hall struck midnight; every one pressed to depart, for seldom was such a late hour trespassed on by these quiet burghers. As they sallied forth they found the heavens once more serene. The storm which had lately obscured them had rolled away, and lay piled up in fleecy masses on the horizon, lighted up by the bright crescent of the moon, which looked like a silver lamp hung up in a palace of clouds.

The dismal occurrence of the night, and the dismal narrations they had made, had left a superstitious feeling in every

mind. They cast a fearful glance at the spot where the buccaneer had disappeared, almost expecting to see him sailing on his chest in the cool moonshine. The trembling rays glittered along the waters, but all was placid; and the current dimpled over the spot where he had gone down. The party huddled together in a little crowd as they repaired homeward; particularly when they passed a lonely field where a man had been murdered; and he who had furthest to go and had to complete his journey alone, though a veteran sexton, and accustomed, one would think, to ghosts and goblins, yet went a long way round, rather than pass by his own churchyard.

Wolfert Webber had now carried home a fresh stock of stories and notions to ruminate upon. His mind was all of a whirl with these freebooting tales; and then these accounts of pots of money and Spanish treasures, buried here and there and everywhere about the rocks and bays of this wild shore, made him almost dizzy.

"Blessed St. Nicholas!" ejaculated he, half aloud, "is it not possible to come upon one of these golden hoards, and so make one's self rich in a twinkling. How hard that I must go on, delving and delving, day in and day out, merely to make a morsel of bread, when one lucky stroke of a spade might enable me to ride in my carriage for the rest of my life!"

As he turned over in his thoughts all that had been told of the singular adventure of the black fisherman, his imagination gave a totally different complexion to the tale. He saw in the gang of red-caps nothing but a crew of pirates burying their spoils, and his cupidity was once more awakened by the possibility of at length getting on the traces of some of this lurking wealth. Indeed, his infected fancy tinged everything with gold. He felt like the greedy inhabitant of Bagdad, when his eye had been greased with the magic ointment of the dervise, that gave him to see all the treasures of the earth. Caskets of buried jewels, chests of ingots, bags of outlandish coins, seemed to court him from their conceal-

ments, and supplicate him to relieve them from their untimely graves.

On making private inquiries about the grounds said to be haunted by father red-cap, he was more and more confirmed in his surmise. He learned that the place had several times been visited by experienced money-diggers, who had heard Mud Sam's story, though none of them had met with success. On the contrary, they had always been dogged with ill luck of some kind or other, in consequence, as Wolfert concluded, of their not going to work at the proper time, and with the proper ceremonials. The last attempt had been made by Cobus Quackenbos, who dug for a whole night and met with incredible difficulty, for as fast as he threw one shovelful of earth out of the hole, two were thrown in by invisible hands. He succeeded so far, however, as to uncover an iron chest, when there was a terrible roaring, and ramping, and raging of uncouth figures about the hole, and at length a shower of blows, dealt by invisible cudgels, that fairly belabored him off the forbidden ground. This Cobus Quackenbos had declared on his deathbed, so that there could not be any doubt of it. He was a man that had devoted many years of his life to money-digging, and it was thought would have ultimately succeeded had he not died suddenly of a brain fever in the almshouse.

Wolfert Webber was now in a worry of trepidation and impatience; fearful lest some rival adventurer should get a scent of the buried gold. He determined privately to seek out the negro fisherman and get him to serve as guide to the place where he had witnessed the mysterious scene of interment. Sam was easily found; for he was one of those old habitual beings that live about a neighborhood until they wear themselves a place in the public mind, and become, in a manner, public characters. There was not an unlucky urchin about town that did not know Mud Sam the fisherman, and think that he had a right to play his tricks upon the old negro. Sam was an amphibious kind of animal, something more of a fish than a man; he had led the life of.

an otter for more than half a century, about the shores of the bay, and the fishing grounds of the Sound. He passed the greater part of his time on and in the water, particularly about Hell Gate; and might have been taken, in bad weather, for one of the hobgoblins that used to haunt that strait. There would he be seen, at all times, and in all weathers; sometimes in his skiff, anchored among the eddies, or prowling, like a shark, about some wreck, where the fish are supposed to be most abundant. Sometimes seated on a rock from hour to hour, looming through mist and drizzle, like a solitary heron watching for its prey. He was well acquainted with every hole and corner of the Sound; from the Wallabout to Hell Gate, and from Hell Gate even unto the Devil's Stepping Stones; and it was even affirmed that he knew all the fish in the river by their Christian names.

Wolfert found him at his cabin, which was not much larger than a tolerable dog-house. It was rudely constructed of fragments of wrecks and driftwood, and built on the rocky shore, at the foot of the old fort, just about what at present forms the point of the Battery. A "most ancient and fish-like smell" pervaded the place. Oars, paddles, and fishing-rods were leaning against the wall of the fort; a net was spread on the sands to dry; a skiff was drawn up on the beach, and at the door of his cabin lay Mud Sam himself, indulging in a true negro's luxury—sleeping in the sunshine.

Many years had passed away since the time of Sam's youthful adventure, and the snows of many a winter had grizzled the knotty wool upon his head. He perfectly recollected the circumstances, however, for he had often been called upon to relate them, though in his version of the story he differed in many points from Peechy Prauw; as is not infrequently the case with authentic historians. As to the subsequent researches of money-diggers, Sam knew nothing about them; they were matters quite out of his line; neither did the cautious Wolfert care to disturb his thoughts on that point. His only wish was to secure the old fisherman as a pilot to the spot, and this was readily effected. The long

time that had intervened since his nocturnal adventure had effaced all Sam's awe of the place, and the promise of a trifling reward roused him at once from his sleep and his sunshine.

The tide was adverse to making the expedition by water, and Wolfert was too impatient to get to the land of promise to wait for its turning; they set off, therefore, by land. A walk of four or five miles brought them to the edge of a wood, which at that time covered the greater part of the eastern side of the island. It was just beyond the pleasant region of Bloomen-dael. Here they struck into a long lane, straggling among trees and bushes, very much overgrown with weeds and mullein stalks as if but seldom used, and so completely overshadowed as to enjoy but a kind of twilight. Wild vines entangled the trees and flaunted in their faces; brambles and briers caught their clothes as they passed; the garter-snake glided across their path; the spotted toad hopped and waddled before them, and the restless cat-bird mewed at them from every thicket. Had Wolfert Webber been deeply read in romantic legend he might have fancied himself entering upon forbidden, enchanted ground; or that these were some of the guardians set to keep a watch upon buried treasure. As it was, the loneliness of the place, and the wild stories connected with it, had their effect upon his mind.

On reaching the lower end of the lane they found themselves near the shore of the Sound, in a kind of amphitheater, surrounded by forest trees. The area had once been a grass-plot, but was now shagged with briers and rank weeds. At one end, and just on the river bank, was a ruined building, little better than a heap of rubbish, with a stack of chimneys rising like a solitary tower out of the center. The current of the Sound rushed along just below it, with wildly-grown trees drooping their branches into its waves.

Wolfert had not a doubt that this was the haunted house of father red-cap, and called to mind the story of Peechy P'rauw. The evening was approaching, and the light, fall-

ing dubiously among these places, gave a melancholy tone to the scene, well calculated to foster any lurking feeling of awe or superstition. The night-hawk, wheeling about in the highest regions of the air, emitted his peevish, boding cry. The woodpecker gave a lonely tap now and then on some hollow tree, and the fire-bird,* as he streamed by them with his deep-red plumage, seemed like some genius flitting about this region of mystery.

They now came to an inclosure that had once been a garden. It extended along the foot of a rocky ridge, but was little better than a wilderness of weeds, with here and there a matted rose-bush, or a peach or plum tree grown wild and ragged, and covered with moss. At the lower end of the garden they passed a kind of vault in the side of the bank, facing the water. It had the look of a root-house. The door, though decayed, was still strong, and appeared to have been recently patched up. Wolfert pushed it open. It gave a harsh grating upon its hinges, and striking against something like a box, a rattling sound ensued, and a skull rolled on the floor. Wolfert drew back shuddering, but was reassured on being informed by Sam that this was a family vault belonging to one of the old Dutch families that owned this estate; an assertion which was corroborated by the sight of coffins of various sizes piled within. Sam had been familiar with all these scenes when a boy, and now knew that he could not be far from the place of which they were in quest.

They now made their way to the water's edge, scrambling along ledges of rocks, and having often to hold by shrubs and grapevines to avoid slipping into the deep and hurried stream. At length they came to a small cove, or rather indent of the shore. It was protected by steep rocks and overshadowed by a thick copse of oaks and chestnuts, so as to be sheltered and almost concealed. The beach sloped gradually within the cove, but the current swept deep and black and rapid along its jutting points. Sam paused, raised his remnant of a hat, and scratched his grizzled poll for a

* Orchard oriole.

moment, as he regarded this nook: then suddenly clapping his hands, he stepped exultingly forward, and pointed to a large iron ring, stapled firmly in the rock, just where a broad shelf of stone furnished a commodious landing-place. It was the very spot where the red-caps had landed. Years had changed the more perishable features of the scene; but rock and iron yield slowly to the influence of time. On looking more narrowly, Wolfert remarked three crosses cut in the rock just above the ring, which had no doubt some mysterious signification. Old Sam now readily recognized the overhanging rock under which his skiff had been sheltered during the thunder-gust. To follow up the course which the midnight gang had taken, however, was a harder task. His mind had been so much taken up on that eventful occasion by the persons of the drama as to pay but little attention to the scenes; and places look different by night and day. After wandering about for some time, however, they came to an opening among the trees which Sam thought resembled the place. There was a ledge of rock of moderate height like a wall on one side, which Sam thought might be the very ridge from which he overlooked the diggers. Wolfert examined it narrowly, and at length described three crosses similar to those above the iron ring, cut deeply into the face of the rock, but nearly obliterated by the moss that had grown on them. His heart leaped with joy, for he doubted not but they were the private marks of the buccaneers to denote the places where their treasure lay buried. All now that remained was to ascertain the precise spot; for otherwise he might dig at random without coming upon the spoil, and he had already had enough of such profitless labor. Here, however, Sam was perfectly at a loss, and, indeed, perplexed him by a variety of opinions; for his recollections were all confused. Sometimes he declared it must have been at the foot of a mulberry tree hard by; then it was just beside a great white stone; then it must have been under a small green knoll, a short distance from the ledge of rock; until at length Wolfert became as bewildered as himself.

The shadows of evening were now spreading themselves over the woods, and rock and tree began to mingle together. It was evidently too late to attempt anything further at present; and, indeed, Wolfert had come unprepared with implements to prosecute his researches. Satisfied, therefore, with having ascertained the place, he took note of all its landmarks, that he might recognize it again, and set out on his return homeward, resolved to prosecute this golden enterprise without delay.

The leading anxiety which had hitherto absorbed every feeling being now in some measure appeased, fancy began to wander, and to conjure up a thousand shapes and chimeras as he returned through this haunted region. Pirates hanging in chains seemed to swing on every tree, and he almost expected to see some Spanish Don, with his throat cut from ear to ear, rising slowly out of the ground and shaking the ghost of a money-bag.

Their way back lay through the desolate garden, and Wolfert's nerves had arrived at so sensitive a state that the flitting of a bird, the rustling of a leaf, or the falling of a nut, was enough to startle him. As they entered the confines of the garden they caught sight of a figure at a distance advancing slowly up one of the walks and bending under the weight of a burden. They paused and regarded him attentively. He wore what appeared to be a woolen cap, and, still more alarming, of a most sanguinary red. The figure moved slowly on, ascended the bank, and stopped at the very door of the sepulchral vault. Just before entering it he looked around. What was the horror of Wolfert when he recognized the grizzly visage of the drowned buccaneer. He uttered an ejaculation of horror. The figure slowly raised his iron fist and shook it with a terrible menace. Wolfert did not pause to see more, but hurried off as fast as his legs could carry him, nor was Sam slow in following at his heels, having all his ancient terrors revived. Away, then, did they scramble, through bush and brake, horribly frightened at every bramble that tagged at their skirts, nor did they pause

to breathe, until they had blundered their way through this perilous wood and had fairly reached the highroad to the city.

Several days elapsed before Wolfert could summon courage enough to prosecute the enterprise, so much had he been dismayed by the apparition, whether living or dead, of the grizzly buccaneer. In the meantime, what a conflict of mind did he suffer! He neglected all his concerns, was moody and restless all day, lost his appetite, wandered in his thoughts and words, and committed a thousand blunders. His rest was broken; and when he fell asleep, the nightmare, in shape of a huge money-bag, sat squatted upon his breast. He babbled about incalculable sums; fancied himself engaged in money-digging; threw the bedclothes right and left, in the idea that he was shoveling among the dirt, groped under the bed in quest of the treasure, and lugged forth, as he supposed, an inestimable pot of gold.

Dame Webber and her daughter were in despair at what they conceived a returning touch of insanity. There are two family oracles, one or other of which Dutch housewives consult in all cases of great doubt and perplexity: the dominie and the doctor. In the present instance they repaired to the doctor. There was at that time a little, dark, mouldy man of medicine famous among the old wives of the Manhattoes for his skill not only in the healing art, but in all matters of strange and mysterious nature. His name was Dr. Knipperhausen, but he was more commonly known by the appellation of the High German doctor.* To him did the poor women repair for counsel and assistance touching the mental vagaries of Wolfert Webber.

They found the doctor seated in his little study, clad in his dark camblet robe of knowledge, with his black velvet cap, after the manner of Boorhaave, Van Helmont, and other medical sages; a pair of green spectacles set in black horn upon his clubbed nose, and poring over a German folio that

* The same, no doubt, of whom mention is made in the history of Dolph Heyliger.

seemed to reflect back the darkness of his physiognomy. The doctor listened to their statement of the symptoms of Wolfert's malady with profound attention; but when they came to mention his raving about buried money, the little man pricked up his ears. Alas, poor women! they little knew the aid they had called in.

Dr. Knipperhausen had been half his life engaged in seeking the short cuts to fortune, in quest of which so many a long lifetime is wasted. He had passed some years of his youth in the Harz mountains of Germany, and had derived much valuable instruction from the miners touching the mode of seeking treasure buried in the earth. He had prosecuted his studies also under a traveling sage who united all the mysteries of medicine with magic and legerdemain. His mind, therefore, had become stored with all kinds of mystic lore: he had dabbled a little in astrology, alchemy, and divination; knew how to detect stolen money, and to tell where springs of water lay hidden; in a word, by the dark nature of his knowledge he had acquired the name of the High German doctor, which is pretty nearly equivalent to that of necromancer. The doctor had often heard rumors of treasure being buried in various parts of the island, and had long been anxious to get on the traces of it. No sooner were Wolfert's waking and sleeping vagaries confided to him than he beheld in them the confirmed symptoms of a case of money-digging, and lost no time in probing it to the bottom. Wolfert had long been sorely depressed in mind by the golden secret, and as a family physician is a kind of father confessor, he was glad of the opportunity of unburdening himself. So far from curing, the doctor caught the malady from his patient. The circumstances unfolded to him awakened all his cupidity; he had not a doubt of money being buried somewhere in the neighborhood of the mysterious crosses, and offered to join Wolfert in the search. He informed him that much secrecy and caution must be observed in enterprises of the kind; that money is only to be digged for at night, with certain forms and ceremonies—the burning of drugs, the re-

peating of mystic words, and, above all, that the seekers must be provided with a divining rod, which had the wonderful property of pointing to the very spot on the surface of the earth under which treasure lay hidden. As the doctor had given much of his mind to these matters, he charged himself with all the necessary preparations, and, as the quarter of the moon was propitious, he undertook to have the divining rod ready by a certain night.*

Wolfert's heart leaped with joy at having met with so

* The following note was found appended to this paper in the handwriting of Mr. Knickerbocker. "There has been much written against the divining rod by those light minds who are ever ready to scoff at the mysteries of nature, but I fully join with Dr. Knipperhausen in giving it my faith. I shall not insist upon its efficacy in discovering the concealment of stolen goods, the boundary-stones of fields, the traces of robbers and murderers, or even the existence of subterraneous springs and streams of water: albeit, I think these properties not to be easily discredited; but of its potency in discovering veins of precious metal, and hidden sums of money and jewels, I have not the least doubt. Some said that the rod turned only in the hands of persons who had been born in particular months of the year; hence astrologers had recourse to planetary influence when they would procure a talisman. Others declared that the properties of the rod were either an effect of chance, or the fraud of the holder, or the work of the devil. Thus sayeth the reverend Father Gaspard Schott in his 'Treatise on Magic': 'Propter hæc et similia argumenta audacter ego pronuncio vim conversivam virgulæ befurcatæ nequaquam naturalem esse, sed vel casu vel fraude virgulam tractantis vel ope diaboli,' etc.

"Georgius Agricola also was of opinion that it was a mere delusion of the devil to inveigle the avaricious and unwary into his clutches, and in his treatise 'de re Metallica,' lays particular stress on the mysterious words pronounced by those persons who employed the divining rod during his time. But I make not a doubt that the divining rod is one of those secrets of natural magic, the mystery of which is to be explained by the sympathies existing between physical things operated upon by the planets, and rendered efficacious by the strong faith of the individual. Let the divining rod be properly gathered at the proper time of the moon, cut into the proper form, used with the necessary ceremonies, and with a perfect faith in its efficacy, and I can confidently recommend it to my fellow-citizens as an infallible means of discovering the various places on the Island of the Manhattoes where treasure hath been buried in the olden time.

D. K."

learned and able a coadjutor. Everything went on secretly but swimmingly. The doctor had many consultations with his patient, and the good women of the household lauded the comforting effect of his visits. In the meantime the wonderful divining rod, that great key to nature's secrets, was duly prepared. The doctor had thumbed over all his books of knowledge for the occasion; and Mud Sam was engaged to take them in his skiff to the scene of enterprise; to work with spade and pickax in unearthing the treasure; and to freight his bark with the weighty spoils they were certain of finding.

At length the appointed night arrived for this perilous undertaking. Before Wolfert left his home he counseled his wife and daughter to go to bed, and feel no alarm if he should not return during the night. Like reasonable women on being told not to feel alarm they fell immediately into a panic. They saw at once by his manner that something unusual was in agitation; all their fears about the unsettled state of his mind were roused with tenfold force; they hung about him entreating him not to expose himself to the night air, but all in vain. When Wolfert was once mounted on his hobby it was no easy matter to get him out of the saddle. It was a clear starlight night when he issued out of the portal of the Webber palace. He wore a large flapped hat tied under the chin with a handkerchief of his daughter's to secure him from the night damp, while Dame Webber threw her long red cloak about his shoulders, and fastened it round his neck.

The doctor had been no less carefully armed and accoutered by his housekeeper, the vigilant Frau Ilsy; and sallied forth in his camblet robe by way of surtout; his black velvet cap under his cocked hat, a thick clasped book under his arm, a basket of drugs and dried herbs in one hand, and in the other the miraculous rod of divination.

The great church clock struck ten as Wolfert and the doctor passed by the churchyard, and the watchman bawled in hoarse voice a long and doleful "All's well!" A deep sleep had already fallen upon this primitive little burgh: nothing

disturbed this awful silence, excepting now and then the bark of some profligate night-walking dog or the serenade of some romantic cat. It is true, Wolfert fancied more than once that he heard the sound of a stealthy footfall at a distance behind them; but it might have been merely the echo of their own steps echoing along the quiet streets. He thought also at one time that he saw a tall figure skulking after them—stopping when they stopped, and moving on as they proceeded; but the dim and uncertain lamplight threw such vague gleams and shadows that this might all have been mere fancy.

They found the negro fisherman waiting for them, smoking his pipe in the stern of his skiff, which was moored just in front of his little cabin. A pickax and spade were lying in the bottom of the boat, with a dark lantern, and a stone bottle of good Dutch courage, in which honest Sam no doubt put even more faith than Dr. Knipperhausen in his drugs.

Thus then did these three worthies embark in their cockle shell of a skiff upon this nocturnal expedition, with a wisdom and valor equaled only by the three wise men of Gotham, who adventured to sea in a bowl. The tide was rising and running rapidly up the Sound. The current bore them along almost without the aid of an oar. The profile of the town lay all in shadow. Here and there a light feebly glimmered from some sick chamber, or from the cabin window of some vessel at anchor in the stream. Not a cloud obscured the deep starry firmament, the lights of which wavered on the surface of the placid river; and a shooting meteor, streaking its pale course in the very direction they were taking, was interpreted by the doctor into a most propitious omen.

In a little while they glided by the point of Corlears Hook with the rural inn which had been the scene of such night adventures. The family had retired to rest, and the house was dark and still. Wolfert felt a chill pass over him as they passed the point where the buccaneer had disappeared. He pointed it out to Dr. Knipperhausen. While regarding

it, they thought they saw a boat actually lurking at the very place; but the shore cast such a shadow over the border of the water that they could discern nothing distinctly. They had not proceeded far when they heard the low sounds of distant oars, as if cautiously pulled. Sam plied his oars with redoubled vigor, and knowing all the eddies and currents of the stream, soon left their followers, if such they were, far astern. In a little while they stretched across Turtle Bay and Kip's Bay, then shrouded themselves in the deep shadows of the Manhattan shore, and glided swiftly along, secure from observation. At length Sam shot his skiff into a little cove, darkly embowered by trees, and made it fast to the well known iron ring. They now landed, and lighting the lantern, gathered their various implements and proceeded slowly through the bushes. Every sound startled them, even that of their footsteps among the dry leaves; and the hooting of a screech owl, from the shattered chimney of father red-cap's ruin, made their blood run cold.

In spite of all Wolfert's caution in taking note of the landmarks, it was some time before they could find the open place among the trees where the treasure was supposed to be buried. At length they came to the ledge of rock; and on examining its surface by the aid of the lantern, Wolfert recognized the three mystic crosses. Their hearts beat quick, for the momentous trial was at hand that was to determine their hopes.

The lantern was now held by Wolfert Webber, while the doctor produced the divining rod. It was a forked twig, one end of which was grasped firmly in each hand, while the center, forming the stem, pointed perpendicularly upward. The doctor moved this wand about, within a certain distance of the earth, from place to place, but for some time without any effect, while Wolfert kept the light of the lantern turned full upon it, and watched it with the most breathless interest. At length the rod began slowly to turn. The doctor grasped it with greater earnestness, his hand trembling with the agitation of his mind. The wand continued slowly to turn, un-

til at length the stem had reversed its position, and pointed perpendicularly downward; and remained pointing to one spot as fixedly as the needle to the pole.

"This is the spot!" said the doctor in an almost inaudible tone.

Wolfert's heart was in his throat.

"Shall I dig?" said Sam, grasping the spade.

"*Pots tausends*, no!" replied the little doctor, hastily. He now ordered his companions to keep close by him and to maintain the most inflexible silence. That certain precautions must be taken and ceremonies used to prevent the evil spirits which keep about buried treasure from doing them any harm. The doctor then drew a circle round the place, enough to include the whole party. He next gathered dry twigs and leaves, and made a fire, upon which he threw certain drugs and dried herbs which he had brought in his basket. A thick smoke rose, diffusing a potent odor, savoring marvelously of brimstone and assafoetida, which, however grateful it might be to the olfactory nerves of spirits, nearly strangled poor Wolfert, and produced a fit of coughing and wheezing that made the whole grove resound. Dr. Knipperhausen then unclasped the volume which he had brought under his arm, which was printed in red and black characters in German text. While Wolfert held the lantern, the doctor, by the aid of his spectacles, read off several forms of conjuration in Latin and German. He then ordered Sam to seize the pickax and proceed to work. The close-bound soil gave obstinate signs of not having been disturbed for many a year. After having picked his way through the surface Sam came to a bed of sand and gravel, which he threw briskly to right and left with the spade.

"Hark!" said Wolfert, who fancied he heard a trampling among the dry leaves, and a rustling through the bushes. Sam paused for a moment, and they listened. No footstep was near. The bat flitted about them in silence; a bird roused from its nest by the light which glared up among the trees, flew circling about the flame. In the profound

stillness of the woodland they could distinguish the current rippling along the rocky shore, and the distant murmuring and roaring of Hell Gate.

Sam continued his labors, and had already dugged a considerable hole. The doctor stood on the edge, reading formulæ every now and then from the black letter volume, or throwing more drugs and herbs upon the fire; while Wolfert bent anxiously over the pit, watching every stroke of the spade. Any one witnessing the scene thus strangely lighted up by fire, lantern, and the reflection of Wolfert's red mantle, might have mistaken the little doctor for some foul magician, busied in his incantations, and the grizzled-headed Sam as some swart goblin, obedient to his commands.

At length the spade of the fisherman struck upon something that sounded hollow. The sound vibrated to Wolfert's heart. He struck his spade again.

"'Tis a chest," said Sam.

"Full of gold, I'll warrant it!" cried Wolfert, clasping his hands with rapture.

Scarcely had he uttered the words when a sound from overhead caught his ear. He cast up his eyes, and lo! by the expiring light of the fire he beheld, just over the disk of the rock, what appeared to be the grim visage of the drowned buccaneer, grinning hideously down upon him.

Wolfert gave a loud cry and let fall the lantern. His panic communicated itself to his companions. The negro leaped out of the hole, the doctor dropped his book and basket and began to pray in German. All was horror and confusion. The fire was scattered about, the lantern extinguished. In their hurry-skurry they ran against and confounded one another. They fancied a legion of hobgoblins let loose upon them, and that they saw by the fitful gleams of the scattered embers strange figures in red caps gibbering and ramping around them. The doctor ran one way, Mud Sam another, and Wolfert made for the water side. As he plunged struggling onward through bush and brake, he heard the tread of some one in pursuit. He scrambled frantically forward.

The footsteps gained upon him. He felt himself grasped by his cloak, when suddenly his pursuer was attacked in turn: a fierce fight and struggle ensued—a pistol was discharged that lighted up rock and bush for a period, and showed two figures grappling together—all was then darker than ever. The contest continued—the combatants clinched each other, and panted and groaned, and rolled among the rocks. There was snarling and growling as of a cur, mingled with curses in which Wolfert fancied he could recognize the voice of the buccaneer. He would fain have fled, but he was on the brink of a precipice and could go no further.

Again the parties were on their feet; again there was a tugging and struggling, as if strength alone could decide the combat, until one was precipitated from the brow of the cliff and sent headlong into the deep stream that whirled below. Wolfert heard the plunge, and a kind of strangling bubbling murmur, but the darkness of the night hid everything from view, and the swiftness of the current swept everything instantly out of hearing. One of the combatants was disposed of, but whether friend or foe Wolfert could not tell, nor whether they might not both be foes. He heard the survivor approach, and his terror revived. He saw, where the profile of the rocks rose against the horizon, a human form advancing. He could not be mistaken: it must be the buccaneer. Whither should he fly! a precipice was on one side, a murderer on the other. The enemy approached: he was close at hand. Wolfert attempted to let himself down the face of the cliff. His cloak caught in a thorn that grew on the edge. He was jerked from off his feet and held dangling in the air, half choked by the string with which his careful wife had fastened the garment round his neck. Wolfert thought his last moment had arrived; already had he committed his soul to St. Nicholas, when the string broke and he tumbled down the bank, bumping from rock to rock and bush to bush, and leaving the red cloak fluttering like a bloody banner in the air.

It was a long while before Wolfert came to himself.

When he opened his eyes the ruddy streaks of the morning were already shooting up the sky. He found himself lying in the bottom of a boat, grievously battered. He attempted to sit up, but was too sore and stiff to move. A voice requested him in friendly accents to lie still. He turned his eyes toward the speaker: it was Dirk Waldron. He had dogged the party, at the earnest request of Dame Webber and her daughter, who, with the laudable curiosity of their sex, had pried into the secret consultations of Wolfert and the doctor. Dirk had been completely distanced in following the light skiff of the fisherman, and had just come in time to rescue the poor money-digger from his pursuer.

Thus ended this perilous enterprise. The doctor and Mud Sam severally found their way back to the Manhattoes, each having some dreadful tale of peril to relate. As to poor Wolfert, instead of returning in triumph, laden with bags of gold, he was borne home on a shutter, followed by a rabble rout of curious urchins. His wife and daughter saw the dismal pageant from a distance, and alarmed the neighborhood with their cries: they thought the poor man had suddenly settled the great debt of nature in one of his wayward moods. Finding him, however, still living, they had him conveyed speedily to bed, and a jury of old matrons of the neighborhood assembled to determine how he should be doctored. The whole town was in a buzz with the story of the money-diggers. Many repaired to the scene of the previous night's adventures; but though they found the very place of the digging, they discovered nothing that compensated for their trouble. Some say they found the fragments of an oaken chest and an iron pot-lid, which savored strongly of hidden money; and that in the old family vault there were traces of bales and boxes; but this is all very dubious.

In fact, the secret of all this story has never to this day been discovered: whether any treasure was ever actually buried at that place; whether, if so, it was carried off at night by those who had buried it; or whether it still remains there under the guardianship of gnomes and spirits until it

shall be properly sought for, is all matter of conjecture. For my part I incline to the latter opinion; and make no doubt that great sums lie buried, both there and in many other parts of this island and its neighborhood, ever since the times of the buccaneers and the Dutch colonists; and I would earnestly recommend the search after them to such of my fellow-citizens as are not engaged in any other speculations.

There were many conjectures formed, also, as to who and what was the strange man of the seas who had domineered over the little fraternity at Corlears Hook for a time, disappeared so strangely, and reappeared so fearfully. Some supposed him a smuggler stationed at that place to assist his comrades in landing their goods among the rocky coves of the island. Others that he was a buccaneer; one of the ancient comrades either of Kidd or Bradish returned to convey away treasures formerly hidden in the vicinity. The only circumstance that throws anything like a vague light over this mysterious matter is a report which prevailed of a strange foreign-built shallop, with the look of a picaroon, having been seen hovering about the Sound for several days without landing or reporting herself, though boats were seen going to and from her at night; and that she was seen standing out of the mouth of the harbor, in the gray of the dawn after the catastrophe of the money-diggers.

I must not omit to mention another report, also, which I confess is rather apocryphal, of the buccaneer, who was supposed to have been drowned, being seen before daybreak, with a lantern in his hand, seated astride his great sea-chest and sailing through Hell Gate, which just then began to roar and bellow with redoubled fury.

While all the gossip world was thus filled with talk and rumor, poor Wolfert lay sick and sorrowful in his bed, bruised in body and sorely beaten down in mind. His wife and daughter did all they could to bind up his wounds both corporal and spiritual. The good old dame never stirred from his bedside, where she sat knitting from morning till night; while his daughter busied herself about him with the fondest

care. Nor did they lack assistance from abroad. Whatever may be said of the desertions of friends in distress, they had no complaint of the kind to make. Not an old wife of the neighborhood but abandoned her work to crowd to the mansion of Wolfert Webber, inquire after his health and the particulars of his story. Not one came, moreover, without her little pipkin of pennyroyal, sage, balm, or other herb-tea, delighted at an opportunity of signalizing her kindness and her doctorship. What drenchings did not the poor Wolfert undergo, and all in vain. It was a moving sight to behold him wasting away day by day; growing thinner and thinner and ghastlier and ghastlier, and staring with rueful visage from under an old patchwork counterpane upon the jury of matrons kindly assembled to sigh and groan and look unhappy around him.

Dirk Waldron was the only being that seemed to shed a ray of sunshine into this house of mourning. He came in with cheery look and manly spirit, and tried to reanimate the expiring heart of the poor money-digger; but it was all in vain. Wolfert was completely done over.—If anything was wanting to complete his despair, it was a notice served upon him in the midst of his distress, that the corporation were about to run a new street through the very center of his cabbage garden. He saw nothing before him but poverty and ruin; his last reliance, the garden of his forefathers, was to be laid waste, and what then was to become of his poor wife and child?

His eyes filled with tears as they followed the dutiful Amy out of the room one morning. Dirk Waldron was seated beside him; Wolfert grasped his hand, pointed after his daughter, and for the first time since his illness broke the silence he had maintained.

“I am going!” said he, shaking his head feebly, “and when I am gone—my poor daughter—”

“Leave her to me, father!” said Dirk, manfully—“I’ll take care of her!”

Wolfert looked up in the face of the cheery, strapping youngster, and saw there was none better able to take care of a woman.

"Enough," said he, "she is yours!—and now fetch me a lawyer—let me make my will and die."

The lawyer was brought—a dapper, bustling, round-headed little man, Roorback (or Rollebuck, as it was pronounced) by name. At the sight of him the women broke into loud lamentations, for they looked upon the signing of a will as the signing of a death-warrant. Wolfert made a feeble motion for them to be silent. Poor Amy buried her face and her grief in the bed-curtain. Dame Webber resumed her knitting to hide her distress, which betrayed itself, however, in a pellucid tear that trickled silently down and hung at the end of her peaked nose; while the cat, the only unconcerned member of the family, played with the good dame's ball of worsted, as it rolled about the floor.

Wolfert lay on his back, his nightcap drawn over his forehead; his eyes closed; his whole visage the picture of death. He begged the lawyer to be brief, for he felt his end approaching, and that he had no time to lose. The lawyer nibbed his pen, spread out his paper, and prepared to write.

"I give and bequeath," said Wolfert, faintly, "my small farm—"

"What—all!" exclaimed the lawyer.

Wolfert half opened his eyes and looked upon the lawyer.

"Yes—all," said he.

"What! all that great patch of land with cabbages and sunflowers, which the corporation is just going to run a main street through?"

"The same," said Wolfert, with a heavy sigh and sinking back upon his pillow.

"I wish him joy that inherits it!" said the little lawyer, chuckling and rubbing his hands involuntarily.

"What do you mean?" said Wolfert, again opening his eyes.

"That he'll be one of the richest men in the place!" cried little Rollebuck.

The expiring Wolfert seemed to step back from the threshold of existence; his eyes again lighted up; he raised himself in his bed, shoved back his red worsted nightcap, and stared broadly at the lawyer.

"You don't say so!" exclaimed he.

"Faith, but I do!" rejoined the other. "Why, when that great field and that piece of meadow come to be laid out in streets, and cut up into snug building lots—why, whoever owns them need not pull off his hat to the patroon!"

"Say you so?" cried Wolfert, half thrusting one leg out of bed, "why, then I think I'll not make my will yet!"

To the surprise of everybody the dying man actually recovered. The vital spark which had glimmered faintly in the socket, received fresh fuel from the oil of gladness which the little lawyer poured into his soul. It once more burned up into a flame.

Give physic to the heart, ye who would revive the body of a spirit-broken man! In a few days Wolfert left his room; in a few days more his table was covered with deeds, plans of streets and building lots. Little Rollebuck was constantly with him, his right-hand man and adviser, and instead of making his will, assisted in the more agreeable task of making his fortune. In fact, Wolfert Webber was one of those worthy Dutch burghers of the Manhattoes whose fortunes have been made, in a manner, in spite of themselves; who have tenaciously held on to their hereditary acres, raising turnips and cabbages about the skirts of the city, hardly able to make both ends meet, until the corporation has cruelly driven streets through their abodes, and they have suddenly awakened out of a lethargy, and, to their astonishment, found themselves rich men.

Before many months had elapsed a great bustling street passed through the very center of the Webber garden, just where Wolfert had dreamed of finding a treasure. His golden dream was accomplished; he did indeed find an un-

looked-for source of wealth; for, when his paternal lands were distributed into building lots, and rented out to safe tenants, instead of producing a paltry crop of cabbages they returned him an abundant crop of rents; insomuch that on quarter day it was a goodly sight to see his tenants rapping at his door, from morning to night, each with a little round-bellied bag of money, the golden produce of the soil.

The ancient mansion of his forefathers was still kept up, but instead of being a little yellow-fronted Dutch house in a garden, it now stood boldly in the midst of a street, the grand house of the neighborhood; for Wolfert enlarged it with a wing on each side, and a cupola or tea room on top, where he might climb up and smoke his pipe in hot weather; and in the course of time the whole mansion was overrun by the chubby-faced progeny of Amy Webber and Dirk Waldron.

As Wolfert waxed old and rich and corpulent, he also set up a great gingerbread-colored carriage drawn by a pair of black Flanders mares with tails that swept the ground; and to commemorate the origin of his greatness he had for a crest a full-blown cabbage painted on the panels, with the pithy motto *Ales Kopf*: (that is to say, *All Head*); meaning thereby that he had risen by sheer headwork.

To fill the measure of his greatness, in the fullness of time the renowned Ramm Rapelye slept with his fathers, and Wolfert Webber succeeded to the leathern-bottomed arm-chair in the inn parlor at Corlears Hook; where he long reigned greatly honored and respected, insomuch that he was never known to tell a story without its being believed, not to utter a joke without its being laughed at.

NAZARETH COLLEGE OF ROCHESTER



3 2769 01 776 315